

MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.

FIRST PICTURE.—THE CONTRACT.

FROM THE WORKS OF WILLIAM HOGARTH, BY THE REV J. TRUSLER.

THERE is always a something wanting to make men happy. The great think themselves not sufficiently rich, and the rich believe themselves not enough distinguished. This is the case of the Alderman of London, and the motive which makes him covet for his daughter the alliance of a great lord; who, on his part, does not consent thereto but on condition of enriching his son: and this is what the painter calls Marriage à-la-Mode.

The portly nobleman, with the conscious dignity of high birth, displays his genealogical tree, the root of which is William, duke of Normandy, and conqueror of England. The valor of his great progenitor, and the various merits of the collateral branches which dignify his pedigree, he considers as united in his own person and therefore looks upon an alliance with his son as the acme of honor, the apex of exaltation. While he is thus glorying in the dust of which his ancestors were once compounded, the prudent citizen, who, in return for it, has parted with dust of a much more weighty and useful description, paying no regard to this heraldic blazonry, devotes all his attention to the marriage settlement. The haughty and supercilious peer is absorbed in the contemplation of his illustrious ancestry, while the worshipful alderman, regardless of the past, and considering the present as merely preparatory for the future, calculates what provision there will be for a young family. Engrossed by their favorite reflections, neither of these sagacious personages regard the want of attachment in those who are to be united as worthy a moment's consideration. To do the viscount justice, he seems equally indifferent; for, though evidently in love,—it is with himself. Gazing in the mirror with delight, and, in an affected style, displaying his gold snuff-box and glittering

ring, he is quite a husband à-la-mode. The lady, very well disposed to retaliate, plays with her wedding-ring, and repays this chilling coldness with sullen contempt; her heart is not worth the viscount's attention, and she determines to bestow it on the first suitor. An insidious lawyer, like an evil spirit, ever ready to move or second a temptation, appears beside her. That he is an eloquent pleader is intimated by his name, Counsellor Silvertongue: that he can make the worse appear the better cause, is only saying in other words, that he is great in the profession. To predict that, with such an advocate, her virtue is in danger, would not be sufficiently expressive. His captivating tones, and insinuating manners, would have ensnared Lucretia.

Two dogs in a corner, coupled against their inclinations, are good emblems of the ceremony which is to pass.

The ceiling of this magnificent apartment is decorated with the story of Pharaoh and his host drowned in the Red Sea. The ocean, on a ceiling, proves a projector's taste; the sublimity of a painter is exemplified in the hero delineated with one of the attributes of Jove. This fluttering figure is probably intended for one of the peer's high-born ancestors, and is invested with the golden fleece, and some other foreign orders. To give him still greater dignity, he is in the character of Jupiter; while one hand holds up an ample robe, the other grasps a thunderbolt. A comet is taking its rapid course over his head, and in one corner of the picture, two of the family of Boreas are judiciously blowing contrary ways. All this is ridiculous enough, but not an iota more absurd than many of the French portraits, which Hogarth evidently intended to burlesque by this parody.

From Household Words.

THE BELLS.

As one who would you city reach,  
Was slowly rowed to shore;  
For whose strange tone and broken speech,  
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They lightly dipped the oar;  
His falling voice and mild dark eye,  
Won the rude boatman's sympathy.

He told them how, when he was young,  
In his bright Southern land,

A grand old church with bells was hung,  
All fashioned by his hand;  
How they had won him much renown  
And honor, in his ancient town.

How love first glided with their sound  
Into one gentle heart;  
And how their tones had linked it round,  
Until the Bells were part  
Of its own nature, and were fraught  
With beautiful and holy thought.

And when, upon his wedding day,  
His ear those joy-bells met;  
His own heart-beatings, quick and gay,  
Seemed to their music set.  
And how that day, hope, love, and pride,  
His whole full heart was satisfied.

How she would say those chimes were meet  
To mark their pleasant hours,  
Which were but the unfoldings sweet  
Of joy's fresh-springing flowers.  
How their young daughter would rejoice  
At theirs, as at its mother's voice.

Like rainbows, many-hued, had shone  
Those hours of youthful prime.  
At length a fatal storm fell on  
The rushing gulf of time;  
And smote him in a single day —  
One wave took wife and child away!

And then the bells poured out a peal  
So sorrowful and slow,  
To his sick heart they seem'd to feel  
For their old master's woe;  
And they had cause; for War's red hand  
Drove him an alien from the land.

Now, for their sake, an ocean far  
In his old age he crossed.  
For, in that dire distressful war,  
The sweet bells had been lost;  
And yearning for their sound again,  
He came to seek them o'er the main —

Was there, because that western town  
Some foreign bells possess'd,  
And the fond hope they were his own  
Flutter'd his aged breast.

He had in them a father's pride;  
He fain would hear them ere he died.

The boatman said, for lovely sound,  
His bells they well might be;  
And sooth to say, they had been found  
Somewhere in Italy.  
Their voices soon would fill his ear;  
The time of evening prayer was near.

And as the sunset deepen'd more  
The silence and the glow,  
They rested, lest one plashing oar  
Might break the calm below;  
And as they heard the light waves float  
Their rippling silver 'gainst the boat, —

Those glorious chimes told out the hour  
With stronger waves of sound;  
And when the full peal left the tower,  
He knew them — they were found!  
And, with strained ear and lips apart,  
He drank their music to his heart.

O! trembling like an under strain  
Their sweeping anthem through,  
Fame's whisperings grew clear again,  
And Hope's old carols, too,  
Though all without their ancient thrill,  
The true bells kept their echo still.

Fond words from wife and child he caught,  
As exquisitely clear  
As though some breeze from heaven had  
brought  
Their voices to his ear.  
He lost, in that one moment's ray  
The gloom of many a lonesome day.

The boatmen saw the flushing smile  
The faded eye that fired:  
The thin hand that kept time a while,  
Until it sank as tired;  
They saw not as the sun went down  
How the pale face had paler grown:

How God, to his long-waiting hope,  
More than it asked had given;  
How his dear bells had borne him up  
To dearer ones in heaven.  
But when the boatmen's toil was o'er:  
His soul had reach'd a brighter shore.

The *Paris Moniteur* states, that during the last sixty years there have been in times of trouble abstractions of papers from the archives of the Marine of France, the recovery of which is greatly desired, chiefly for purposes of historical research. "These writings being often in the handwriting of eminent men, have in many cases, no doubt, found their way into the collections and museums of collectors. The restoration of such papers or authentic copies of them to the Department of the French Marine, will be very acceptable to the French Government."

EDITORIAL. — A New Hampshire editor, while recently travelling, had his wallet abstracted from

his pocket by an adroit pickpocket, while indulging in a short nap. The thief was so disgusted with the result of his exploit, that he returned the plunder by express, to the address written inside the wallet, with the following note: — "You miserabil skunk, hears your pocket-book. I don't keep no sich. Fur a man dressed as well as you was to go round with a wellit with nuthin' in it but a lot of noospapur scraps, a ivory toothcomb, two noospapur stamps, an' a pass from a ralerode directur, is a contemptible impurition on the public. As I hear your a editor, I return your trash. I never robe any only gentleman." *Country Gentlemen, (Albany, N. Y.)*

From the Edinburgh Review.

1. *Vanity Fair: a Novel without a Hero.* By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY. London: 1849.
2. *The History of Pendennis.* By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY. London: 1849.
3. *The History of Henry Esmond, a Colonel in the Service of Her Majesty Queen Anne.* Written by himself. London: 1853.
4. *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century; a Series of Lectures.* By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY. London: 1853.

WE had intended to review the whole of Mr. Thackeray's writings; but when we came to examine the twelve volumes which have been poured forth from the New York Press, and considered that they were only the fore-runners of the three great novels which we have placed at the head of this Article, we felt that, if we attempted to criticise all, we must treat each superficially. We have resolved, therefore, to confine ourselves to the works on which Mr. Thackeray's fame really rests, and to leave Fitz-Boodle, and Barry Lyndon, and Men's Wives, and the Snobs, and the Yellow Plush Papers, and the Prize Novelists, and Mr. Brown's Letters, and Mr. Titmarsh's Travels, under the anonymous or pseudonymous veils in which their author thought fit to envelop them. We shall begin, therefore, with *Vanity Fair*.

We cannot tell what Mr. Thackeray's genius and diligence may still have in store for us; but of their numerous products up to the present time, *Vanity Fair* appears to us by far the best, the fullest of natural and amusing incident, and of characters with bold and firm outlines, and fine and consistent details. It is called "*A Novel without a Hero*;" and certainly, if a hero or a heroine be a person fitted to attract the affection or to rouse the admiration of the reader, if he or she is to be revered or to be adored, there is none such in *Vanity Fair*. There are, however, two marked figures which so far act the part of heroines as to be the props on which the whole tissue of the narrative is suspended, the centres which give to the plot the amount of unity which it possesses. These, of course, are Amelia and Becky. Their outward circumstances have much similarity. Each is born in middle life: they are educated at the same school; each marries, and, at the same time, a military man; each loses her husband, though not by similar causes, and is left with a single boy; each struggles with poverty; and each withdraws at the end of the story in affluence. An ordinary writer would have found it difficult to keep distinct characters so similar in their fortunes. In Mr. Thackeray's hands there the resemblance ends. In every other respect

they are not merely different, but contrasted. One is the impersonation of virtue without intellect, the other that of intellect without virtue. One has no head, the other no heart.

Amelia Sedley is amiable by instinct. It is her nature to love all those with whom she comes in contact, just as it is the nature of a spaniel to caress every visitor. But her love, being founded on propinquity, not on judgment, is, like that of the spaniel, indiscriminating. She likes best those whom she has known longest,—her father, her mother, her husband, and her son,—and simply, as far as can be ascertained from their characters, because she has known them longest; for in themselves the first three are among the most unlovable specimens of this rich collection of deformities. The father is an ignorant, vulgar stock-broker, coarse and insolent in prosperity, and utterly beaten down by adversity. There are few passages in the work more highly finished than the interview between Sedley after his bankruptcy and his old protégé Captain Dobbin:—

"I am very glad to see you. Captain Dobbin, Sir," said he, after a skulking look or two at his visitor. "How is the worthy alderman, and my lady, your excellent mother, Sir?" He looked round at the waiter as he said, "my lady," as much as to say, Hark ye, John, I have friends still, and persons of rank and reputation too. "My wife will be very happy to see her ladyship. I've a very kind letter here from your father, Sir, and beg my respectful compliments to him. Lady D—— will find us in rather a smaller house than we were accustomed to receive our friends in; but it's snug, and the change of air does good to my daughter, who was suffering in town rather—you remember little Emmy, Sir?—Yes, suffering a good deal." The old gentleman's eyes were wandering as he spoke, and he was thinking of something else, as he sat thrumming on his papers and fumbling at the worn red tape.

"You're a military man," he went on; "I ask you, Bill Dobbin, could any man ever have speculated upon the return of that Corsican scoundrel from Elba? When the allied sovereigns were here last year, and we gave 'em that dinner in the city, Sir, and we saw the Temple of Concord, and the fireworks, and the Chinese bridge in St. James's Park, could any sensible man suppose that peace wasn't really concluded, after we'd actually sung *To Deum* for it, Sir? I ask you, William, could I suppose that the Emperor of Austria was a damned traitor—a traitor, and nothing more? I don't mince words—a double-faced infernal traitor and schemer, who meant to have his son-in-law back all along. And I say that the escape of Boney from Elba was a damned imposition and plot, Sir, in which half the powers of Europe were concerned, to bring the funds down, and to ruin this country. That's why I'm here, William. That's why my name's in the Gazette. Why, Sir?—because I trusted the Emperor of Russia and the Prince Regent. Look here. Look at my papers.

Look what the funds were on the 1st of March, — what the French fives were when I bought for the account, — and what they're at now. There was collusion, Sir, or that villain never would have escaped. Where was the English Commissioner who allowed him to get away? He ought to be shot, Sir, — brought to a court-martial, and shot, by Jove."

"We're going to hunt Boney out, Sir," Dobbin said, rather alarmed at the fury of the old man, the veins of whose forehead began to swell, and who sat drumming his papers with his clenched fist. "We are going to hunt him out, Sir, — the Duke's in Belgium already, and we expect marching orders every day."

"Give him no quarter. Bring back the villain's head, Sir. Shoot the coward down, Sir," Sedley roared. "I'd enlist myself, by —; but I'm a broken old man — ruined by that damned scoundrel — and by a parcel of swindling thieves in this country whom I made, Sir, and who are rolling in their carriages now." (Pages 173, 174.)

Mr. Sedley is merely contemptible. His wife is equally contemptible, but, having a stronger will, is also odious. Mr. Thackeray has delightfully sketched her whole character in the scene in which she quarrels with Amelia for exclaiming that her child shall not be poisoned with Daffy's Elixir.

Mr. Thackeray adds: —

Till the termination of her natural life, this breach between Mrs. Sedley and her daughter was never thoroughly mended. The quarrel gave the elder lady numberless advantages, which she did not fail to turn to account with female ingenuity and perseverance. For instance, she scarcely spoke to Amelia for many weeks afterwards. She warned the domestics not to touch the child, as Mrs. Osborne might be offended. She asked her daughter to see and satisfy herself that there was no poison prepared in the little daily messes that were concocted for Georgy. When neighbors asked after the boy's health, she referred them pointedly to Mrs. Osborne. She never ventured to ask whether the baby was well or not. She would not touch the child, although he was her grandson, and own precious darling, for she was not used to children, and might kill it." (p. 345.)

The person, however, who holds the first place in Amelia's heart is George Osborne, her husband. Mr. Thackeray has painted him at full length, with relentless truth and detail. He is first introduced to us as a young lieutenant, the accepted lover of Amelia, fond of her person, and pleased by her admiration, but ashamed of her family, and very much inclined to think that he is throwing himself away — that with his beauty and talents and expectations (his father is great in the tallow trade), he might aspire to something higher than a stock-broker's daughter. Then come three events simultaneously. He gets his company, Amelia is ruined, and she releases

him from his engagement. He tries on his new uniform, and thinks it becomes him much; weeps over the trinkets and hair locket which she sends back to him; and tells Dobbin, with some despondency, that "all is over between them."

Dobbin, however, disapproves of his friend's easy acquiescence, carries him back to his betrothed, and never leaves him until the knot has been tied, and the new couple are on their road to Brighton.

One of the most powerful portraits in the work is that of old Osborne, George's father. If it have a defect, it is that it is too uniformly black. It is made up of arrogance, vanity, malignity, vindictiveness, ingratitude; in short, of all the bad passions and bad tendencies that are capable of coexistence. Of course he disapproves of the match, and notifies to George that he has nothing to expect, except what he cannot be deprived of, a couple of thousand pounds, his share of his mother's fortune.

These are the comments of the bridegroom in the first week of his honeymoon: —

"A pretty way you have managed the affair," said George, looking savagely at William Dobbin. "Look there, Dobbin," and he flung over to the latter his parent's letter. "A beggar, by Jove, and all in consequence of my d——d sentimentality. Why could n't we have waited? A ball might have done for me in the course of the war, and may still, and how will Emmy be bettered by being left a beggar's widow? It was all your doing. You were never easy until you had got me married and ruined. What the deuce am I to do with two thousand pounds? Such a sum won't last two years. I've lost a hundred and forty to Crawley at cards and billiards since I've been down here. A pretty manager of a man's matters you are, forsooth. Do you suppose a man of my habits can live on his pay and a hundred a year? How the deuce am I to keep up my position in the world upon such a pitiful pittance? I can't change my habits. I must have my comforts. I was n't brought up on porridge like Mac Whirter, or on potatoes like old O'Dowd. Do you expect my wife to take in soldiers' washing, or ride after the regiment in a baggage waggon?" (P. 211.)

The regiment is ordered abroad, and the scene changes to Brussels. George neglects his bride, wastes in a few weeks the little capital which was to have been her only support, tries to seduce her friend, hurries from the Duchess of Richmond's celebrated ball to Quatre Bras, and dies at Waterloo.

The amiable ridiculous character in the drama is Dobbin; and one of his absurdities is, that at first sight, and knowing that she is engaged to his friend George, he falls in love with Amelia. Year after year, during her widowhood, he urges his suit — but in vain.



Her heart is filled by the recollection of "that departed saint," her husband. At length it suits Becky that Amelia should marry, and thus she effects her purpose.

"Listen to me, Amelia," said Becky, marching up and down the room before the other, and surveying her with a sort of contemptuous kindness. "I want to talk to you. You are no more fit to live in the world than a baby in arms. You must marry, or you and your precious boy will go to ruin — you must have a husband, you fool; and one of the best gentlemen I ever saw has offered to you a hundred times."

"I tried, — I tried my best, indeed I did, Rebecca," said Amelia deprecatingly, "but I could not forget —" and she looked up at George's portrait.

"Could not forget him," cried Becky; "that selfish humbug, that low-bred cockney dandy, that padded booby, who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart. Why, the man would have jilted you, but that Dobbin made him keep his word. He never cared for you. He used to sneer about you to me time after time, and made love to me the week after he married you."

"It's false! It's false!" said Amelia, starting up.

"Look there, you fool," Becky said, still with provoking good humor, and taking a little paper out of her belt flung it into Amelia's lap. "You know his hand-writing; he wrote that to me, — wanted me to run away with him, — gave it to me under your nose the day before he was shot, — and served him right," Becky repeated. (Pp. 618, 619.)

Amelia, as usual, obeys and marries Dobbin a week after.

Amelia's boy is one of the least marked characters. Indeed it is difficult to make a child attractive, except in tragedy. Mamilus, Arthur, Edward the Fifth, and his brother affect us, but it is because we contrast their happy childish prattle with the dark fate that is soon to swallow them up. If they had been destined to a long and happy life, we should have been wearied by them. Again, the youth of a very remarkable man, of Rousseau, for instance, or of Southey, is instructive, both as it shows the dawn of an intellect that was to shine so brightly, and as it enables us to trace many of the moral excellences and defects of the adult to the training of the child. But this can be done only in an autobiography. Such a narrative loses its merit with its reality. Who can read the *Emile*?

Now as little Osborne was intended for wealth and prosperity, he could not be made interesting by contrast, and Mr. Thackeray has prudently sketched him in rather indistinct colors, as a handsome, common-place, spoiled boy, likely when he should come of age to spend a fortune, but certainly not to earn one.

Such are the objects of Amelia's affections.

As to her actions, few of them are really hers. She generally obeys, without preference and without reluctance, the impulse given to her by those immediately around her. In obedience to her parents she falls in love with George Osborne; by her father's orders she dismisses him; at her mother's bidding she resumes him. The only act in which she exhibits free-will is the surrender of her son to his grandfather. The struggle which she goes through, the feelings which alternately impel and restrain her, are described with exquisite skill.

The evils and the dangers of such a surrender, were scarcely capable of exaggeration. To give up a child of ten years old to the absolute management of a stranger is a frightful risk, even if that stranger were a Fenelon. To give it up to a coarse, uneducated, violent old man: to expose it to be crushed by his tyranny, and spoiled by his indulgence; to throw into its path the temptations of both wealth and poverty, those which rouse into insolence, and those which degrade into servility — these are chances from which a sensible mother would have recoiled. No hopes of wealth or grandeur; no fears, except that of absolute starvation, would have induced her to incur them.

But these are *not* the motives which influence Amelia. They do not even occur to her: — as far as the boy is concerned, she sees nothing in Mr. Osborne's offers but wealth, station, and education. Yet she rejects those offers with indignation.

"She was never," says our author, "seen angry but twice or thrice in her life, and it was in one of these moods that Mr. Osborne's attorney had the good fortune to behold her. She rose up trembling and flushing, and tore the letter into a hundred fragments. 'I take money to part from my child! Who dares insult me by proposing such a thing? Tell Mr. Osborne that it is a cowardly letter, Sir, — a cowardly letter; — I will not answer it. I wish you good morning, Sir, — and she bowed me out of the room like a tragedy queen, said the lawyer who told the story.'" (P. 413.)

The cause of all this anger is simply the selfish feeling that she cannot bear to lose the society of her son. Poverty, however, comes on her like an armed man; every resource fails, and "she tries in vain to hide from herself the thought which will return to her, that she ought to part with the boy, that she is the only barrier between him and prosperity. She can't, she can't, — not now at least. Oh, it is too hard to think of and to bear." (P. 442.)

At length she submits. "The sentence is passed, — the child must go from her to others, — to forget her. Her heart, her treasure,

—her hope, joy, love, worship,—she must give him up.” (P. 443.)

The boy is given over to his grandfather; but some of the evils that were to be expected do not follow. Old Osborne has become somewhat mellowed by age and infirmity. Georgy suffers not from his severity, but from his fondness. Every stimulant is applied to his vanity, his imperiousness, and his self-indulgence. “How he du damn and swear,” the servants say, delighted by his precocity. He grows up domineering, conceited, and selfish. But the feebleness of mind which prevented his mother’s anticipating these results, prevents her perceiving them. She believes him to be perfect, or, what, in her eyes is the same, to be his father over again.

The reader will have inferred, from the attention which we have paid to the character of Amelia, that we think it a creation of extraordinary skill. We do so. It appears to us to unite the two greatest merits that a fictitious character can possess,—originality and nature. And yet it is the source of one of the greatest blemishes of the work. Mr. Thackeray indulges in the bad practice of commenting on the conduct of his *dramatis personæ*. He is perpetually pointing out to us the generosity of Dobbin, the brutality of the Osbornes, the vanity of Joseph Sedley, and so on, instead of leaving us to find out their qualities from their actions. And in the course of this running commentary he keeps repeating that Amelia was adorable; that she was the idol of all who approached her, and deserved to be so; in short, that she was the perfection of womanhood. Now we will not deny that she had qualities which would make her agreeable as a plaything, and useful as a slave; but playthings or slaves are not what men look for in wives. They want partners of their cares, counsellors in their perplexities, aids in their enterprises, and companions in their pursuits. To represent a pretty face, an affectionate disposition, and a weak intellect as together constituting the most attractive of women, is a libel on both sexes.

We must now take up Amelia’s pendant, Becky: the character, among all that Mr. Thackeray has drawn, which has received the most applause.

When we said that she was the impersonation of intellect without virtue, we used the word virtue in perhaps too narrow a sense, as indicating the qualities which we love, the the qualities which arise from the sympathy of their possessor with others, and therefore occasion *them* to sympathize with him. Now of these qualities Becky is devoid. She has no affection, no pity, no disinterested benevolence. She is indeed perfectly selfish. She wants all the virtues which are to be exercised for the benefit of others. She has neither

justice nor *vera*. She treats mankind as mankind treats the brutes, as mere sources of utility or amusement, as instruments or playthings, or prey. But many of the self-regarding virtues she possesses in a high degree. She has great industry, prudence, decision, courage and self-reliance. These are the qualities which, when under the direction of a powerful intellect, unbiassed by sympathies, and unrestrained by scruples, have produced many of the masters of mankind. In a higher sphere Becky might have been a Semiramis or a Catherine. As might be expected in a person of her good sense and self-control, she is mistress of the smaller virtues, good temper and good nature: she always wishes to please, because it is only by pleasing that she can subjugate. She is not resentful or spiteful, because she despises those around her too much to waste anger on them, and because she knows that petty injuries are generally repaid with interest. Her estimate of herself is not far from the truth. She is visiting at a sober country-house, in which she formerly lived as a governess.

One day followed another, and the ladies of the house passed their life in those calm pursuits and amusements which satisfy country ladies. Rebecca sung Handel and Haydn to the family of evenings, and engaged in a large piece of worsted work, as if she had been born to the business, and as if this kind of life was to continue with her until she should sink to the grave in a polite old age, leaving regrets and a great quantity of consols behind her,—as if there were not cares and duns, schemes, shifts, and poverty waiting outside the Park gates to pounce upon her when she issued into the world again.

“It is n’t difficult to be a country gentleman’s wife,” Rebecca thought; “I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a-year. I could dawdle about in the nursery, and count the apricots on the wall. I could water plants in a green-house, and pick off dead leaves from the geraniums; I could ask old women about their rheumatisms, and order half-a-crown’s worth of soup for the poor; I should n’t miss it much out of five thousand a-year. I could go to church and keep awake in the great family pew; or go to sleep behind the curtains, and with my veil down, if I only had practice. I could pay every body if I had but the money.”

The old haunts, the old fields and woods, the copses, ponds and gardens, the rooms of the old house where she had spent a couple of years seven years ago, were all carefully revisited by her. She had been young then, or comparatively so, for she forgot the time when she ever *was* young,—but she remembered her thoughts and feelings seven years back, and contrasted them with those which she had at present, now that she had seen the world and lived with great people, and raised herself far beyond her original humble station.

“I have passed beyond it because I have brains,” Becky thought, “and almost all the rest

of the world are fools. I could not go back and consort with those people now, whom I used to meet in my father's studio. Lords come up to my door with stars and garters, instead of poor artists with screws of tobacco in their pockets. I have a gentleman for my husband and an Earl's daughter for my sister, in the very house where I was little better than a servant a few years ago. But am I much better to do now in the world than I was when I was the poor painter's daughter, and wheedled the grocer round the corner for sugar and tea? Suppose I had married Francis, who was so fond of me, I couldn't have been much poorer than I am now. Heigho! I wish I could exchange my position in society, and all my relations for a snug run in the three per cent. consols." For so it was that Becky felt the Vanity of human affairs, and it was in those securities that she would have liked to cast anchor. (Pp. 376, 377.)

The game which poor Becky plays is, from its outset, almost a hopeless one; it is, to rise in the world without money, or birth, or connections or friends. She begins it at seventeen; the orphan, penniless daughter of a drunken, unsuccessful painter and a French opera girl. Received as a French teacher in Miss Pinkerton's school, bored by the pompous vanity of the mistress, the silly chat and scandal and quarrels of the girls, and the frigid, empty correctness of the governesses, she forms her habits of unsympathizing self-existence. She fights her way to be a governess in Sir Pitt Crawley's family; and by a mixture of wheedling, coaxing, flattering, and rallying (described with as much humor as it is conceived), hooks and plays with, and at length lands, her first spoil, Captain Rawdon Crawley. Her prize, however, resembles the gold paid by the magician in the Arabian Nights, which turns to leaves in the receiver's purse. Crawley's aunt, disgusted by his match, burns a will under which he was to have inherited 50,000*l.*; and Becky finds that all that she has gained is a good-natured husband, overwhelmed with debt, with no property but his commission in the Life Guards, and no knowledge except of whist, piquette, and billiards. With her usual good sense, she makes the most of her unpromising cards—goes with the regiment to Brussels—turns the general commanding the division into her slave—provides victims for the admirable play of her husband—and makes him the happiest of mortals.

She had mastered this rude coarse nature, and he loved and worshipped her with all his faculties of regard and admiration. In all his life he had never been so happy as, during the past few months, his wife had made him. She had known perpetually how to divert him, and he had found his house and her society a thousand times more pleasant than any place or company which he had ever frequented from his childhood until now. And he cursed his past follies and extravagances,

and bemoaned his vast outlying debts, which must remain for ever as obstacles to prevent his wife's advance.

Rebecca always knew how to conjure away these moods of melancholy. "Why, my stupid love," she would say, "we have not done with your aunt yet. If she fails us, isn't there what you call the Gazette? or, stop, when your uncle Bute's life drops, I have another scheme. The living always belonged to the youngest brother, and why should n't you sell out and go into the Church?" The idea of this conversion set Rawdon into roars of laughter; you might have heard the explosion through the hotel at midnight. General Tufts heard it from his quarters in the first floor; and Rebecca acted the scene with great spirit, and preached Rawdon's first sermon, to the immense delight of the General at breakfast. (Pp. 258, 259.)

The night before Quatre Bras comes. Three partings are described. The first is that between Amelia and George Osborne.

On arriving at his quarters from the ball, George found his regimental servant already making preparations for his departure; the man had understood his signal to be still, and these arrangements were very quickly and silently, made. Should he go in and wake Amelia, he thought, or leave a note for her brother to break the news of departure to her? He went to look at her once again.

She had been awake when he first entered her room, but had kept her eyes closed, so that even her wakefulness should not seem to reproach him. But when he had returned, so soon after herself, too, this timid little heart had felt more at ease, and, turning towards him as he stepped softly out of the room, she had fallen into a light sleep.

He came to the bed-side, and looked at the hand, the little soft hand, lying asleep: and he bent over the pillow noiselessly towards the gentle pale face.

Two fair arms closed tenderly round his neck as he stooped down. "I am awake, George," the poor child said, with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely by his own. She was awake, poor soul, and to what? At that moment a bugle from the Place of Arms began sounding clearly, and was taken up through the town; and amidst the drums of the infantry, and the shrill pipes of the Scotch, the whole city awoke. (P. 256.)

The next is between Major O'Dowd, who commands the regiment, and his wife.

"I'd like ye wake me about half an hour before the assembly beats," the Major said to his lady. "Call me at half-past one, Peggy, dear, and see me things is ready. May be I'll not come back to breakfast, Mrs. O'D." With which words, the Major ceased talking, and fell asleep.

Mrs. O'Dowd, the good housewife, arrayed in curl papers and a camisole, felt that her duty was to act, and not to sleep, at this juncture. "Time enough for that," she said, "when Mick's gone;" and so she packed his travelling-valise ready for

the march, brushed his cloak, his cap and other warlike habiliments, set them out in order for him; and stowed away in the cloak pockets a light package of portable refreshments, and a wicker covered flask or pocket-pistol, containing near a pint of remarkably sound Cognac brandy, of which she and the Major approved very much, and as soon as the hands of the "repayther" pointed to half-past one, and its interior arrangements (it had a tone quite equal to a cathay-dral its fair owner considered) knelled forth that fatal hour, Mrs. O'Dowd woke up her Major, and had as comfortable a cup of coffee prepared for him as any made that morning in Brussels. (Pp. 257, 258.)

Last comes that of the Crawley's.

Rebecca, as we have said, wisely determined not to give way to unavailing sentimentality on her husband's departure. She waved him an adieu from the window, and stood there for a moment looking out after he was gone. The cathedral towers and the full gables of the quaint old houses were just beginning to blush in the sunrise. There had been no rest for her that night. She was still in her pretty ball dress, her fair hair hanging somewhat out of curl on her neck, and the circles round her eyes dark with watching. "What a fright I seem," she said, examining herself in the glass, "and how pale this pink makes one look!" So she divested herself of this pink raiment; in doing which a note fell out from her corsage, which she picked up with a smile, and locked into her dressing-box. And then she put her bouquet of the ball into a glass of water, and went to bed, and slept very comfortably.

The town was quite quiet when she woke up at ten o'clock, and partook of coffee, very requisite and comfortable after the exhaustion and grief of the morning's occurrences.

This meal over, she surveyed her position. Should the worst befall, all things considered, she was pretty well to do. There were her own trinkets and trousseau, in addition to those which her husband had left behind. Besides these, and the little mare, the General, her slave and worshipper, had made her many very handsome presents, in the shape of cashmere shawls bought at the auction of a bankrupt French general's lady, and numerous tributes from the jewellers' shops, all of which betokened her admirer's taste and wealth.

Every calculation made of these valuables, Mrs. Rebecca found, not without a pungent feeling of triumph and self-satisfaction, that should circumstances occur, she might reckon on six or seven hundred pounds, at the very least, to begin the world with: and she passed the morning disposing, ordering, looking out, and locking up her properties in the most agreeable manner. If this is a novel without a hero, at least let us lay claim to a heroine. No man in the British army which has marched away, not the great duke himself, could be more cool or collected in the presence of doubts and difficulties, than the indomitable little aide-de-camp's wife. (Pp. 260, 261, 262.)

In a year or two we find Becky in London,

having achieved the perilous enterprise of scaling the heights of fashion; but she finds them neither secure nor amusing.

Becky's former acquaintances hated and envied her: the poor woman herself was yawning in spirit. "I wish I were out of it," she said to herself. "I would rather be a parson's wife, and teach a Sunday School, than this; or a sergeant's lady and ride in the regimental wagon; or O! how much gayer it would be to wear spangles and trousers, and dance before a booth at a fair."

"You would do it very well," said Lord Steyne, laughing. She used to tell the great man her *ennuis* and perplexities in her artless way — they amused him.

In her commerce with the great, our dear friend showed the same frankness which distinguished her transactions with the lowly in station. On one occasion, when out at a very fine house, Rebecca was (perhaps rather ostentatiously) holding a conversation in the French language with a celebrated tenor singer of that nation, while the Lady Grizzel Macbeth looked over her shoulder scowling at the pair.

"How very well you speak French," Lady Grizzel said, who herself spoke the tongue in an Edinburgh accent most remarkably to hear. "I ought to know it," Becky modestly said, casting down her eyes. "I taught it in a school, and my mother was a French-woman."

Lady Grizzel was won by her humility, and was mollified towards the little woman. She deplored the fatal levelling tendencies of the age, which admitted persons of all classes into the society of their superiors; but her ladyship owned, that this one at least was well behaved, and never forgot her place in life.

How the Crawleys got the money which was spent upon the entertainments with which they treated the polite world, was a mystery which gave rise to some conversation at the time, and probably added zest to these little festivities. Who knows what stories were or were not told of our dear and innocent friend? Certain it is, that if she had had all the money which she was said to have begged, or borrowed, or stolen, she might have capitalized and been honest for life, whereas, — but this is advancing matters. The truth is, that by economy and good management — by a sparing use of ready money, and by paying scarcely anybody — people can manage, for a time at least, to make a great show with very little means: and it is our belief, that Becky's much-talked-of parties, which were not, after all that was said, very numerous, cost this lady very little more than the wax candles which lighted the walls. Stillbrook supplied her with game and fruit in abundance. Lord Steyne's cellar was at her disposal, and that excellent nobleman's famous cooks presided over her little kitchen, or sent by my lord's order the rarest delicacies from their own. I protest it is quite shameful in the world to abuse a simple creature, as people of her time abuse Becky, and I warn the public against believing one-tenth of the stories against her. (Pp. 453, 454, 455.)

If Becky could have changed sexes with



her husband, all would have gone well. She might have canvassed a borough as a Radical, and a county as a Tory — might have gained the ear of the House by malignity, and kept it by effrontery — might have risen into notoriety by attacking the first men of the age, and have become the leader of a party by joining one which all persons of sense had deserted. But she is a woman; she can establish herself only through her husband; and her husband has neither talents, nor knowledge, nor character. Her only resource is to treat him as damaged goods generally are treated — to export him to the colonies. It is an awful job; but her friend Lord Steyne is all-powerful. Such things, however, are not to be got for nothing, and poor Becky has only one means of paying for them.

Unhappily, on the very night that the gazette is being printed which announces that His Majesty has been pleased to appoint Col. Crawley, C. B., to be the Governor of Coventry Island, Crawley discovers what was the nature of the contract by which his preferment was obtained. He knocks down his patron, publishes his wife's shame, separates himself from her for ever, and goes out to administer Swamp Town.

Mr. Thackeray has not made Becky's downward course as entertaining as her rise. Indeed, it was impossible. No series of events can amuse, or, what is a much easier thing, can interest, unless we can sympathize in some respects with the principal agent. Even in tragedy, the most atrocious villain is generally invested by the poet with some qualities which we admire and even love. Richard the Third, Iago, and Lovelace, perhaps the most hateful of poetical heroes, possess in the highest degree wit, sagacity, courage, and decision. Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth from Satan. Now, in Becky's earlier career, though there was more to hate, there was much to admire, and something to like. The reader thoroughly sympathized with her scorn of fools, however highly placed; with the intrepidity with which she encountered insolence, and the dexterity with which she repelled it; with her spirit in danger, her resources in difficulty, and the gay vivacity which was spread like sunshine over her whole demeanor. He was amused even by the impudence of her vanity, and the breadth and boldness of her mendacity. It is difficult to avoid sympathizing with the success of schemes so magnificently planned and so audaciously carried out. It is not Fortune alone that favors the bold. All the world follows Fortune's example.

But with her success all the charm of Becky disappears. Even Mr. Thackeray turns his back upon her. He no longer supplies her with the sagacity and presence of mind which carried her triumphantly through the storms and

among the quicksands of her London life. He allows her to sink from degradation to degradation, without an effort on his part, or even on hers, to extricate her, until she loses her identity, and the brilliant Rebecca turns into a vulgar swindler. At length, he seems to relent, and to take pity on the distresses of an old acquaintance who has afforded so much amusement. He throws Amelia and her brother across her path, and gives up to her the rich Joseph as a prey. And here we think her changes ought to have ended. As the ruler, and, as soon as the climate of Coventry Island rendered her a widow, the wife, of Joseph Sedley, she might have passed the tranquil, decorous middle age to which he at length dismisses her, — "busied in works of piety; going to church, and never without a footman; the subscriber to every charity; the fast friend of the destitute orange girl, the neglected washerwoman, and the distressed muffinman; a patroness and stall-keeper in every benevolent bazaar in Cheltenham and Bath." Instead of this, he blackens her with the vulgar commonplace crimes of making Sedley's will in her favor, insuring his life, and poisoning him.

This we venture to think a mistake. Comic characters are intended to amuse, not to frighten. They may be as vicious as the author pleases; they may be utterly heartless, they may swindle, they may rob; but they must not kill. The extent to which tragedy is allowable may be undefined; but this we think is clear, namely, that the comedy must be an accessory to the tragedy, not the tragedy to the comedy. The intermixture of a few cheerful spots among gloomy or frightful scenes is felt as a relief. The intrusion of the terrible among gay images is an interruption. It is like a gibbet as the background of a Watteau. We are pleased to enjoy a respite from the continued contemplation of suffering or danger. We are shocked at being disturbed in our laughter by wailings and screams. All Shakspeare's tragedies have a mixture of comedy; none of his comedies contain any thing that is tragic. Hotspur, Henry the Fifth, and Richard are tragic. Their powers for good and for evil are gigantic; the fate of kingdoms depends on them. They can afford to trifle; their wit and humor, though sometimes pushed to buffoonery, does not lower them. Richard may smile, because he can murder while he smiles. But what should we think of Shakspeare if he had made Falstaff an assassin, or had engaged Shallow, Slender, and Pious in a murderous conspiracy? Hatred is to most men a painful emotion. There are undoubtedly torpid dispositions which require strong excitement, which enjoy pictures of murderers, tyrants, and oppressors just as they enjoy the taste of garlic, the smell of tobacco; but



these coarse intellectual palates are rare. In most minds the indignation produced by the description of great crimes requires to be soothed by the exemplary punishment of the offender, or to be diverted by withdrawing from him the reader's attention, and fixing it on the heroism of the sufferer, on the courage with which he resists violence, or on the patience with which he bears it. But these are the materials of tragedy; and when they are introduced into a work of which the basis is comic, they recall us painfully from the sunny scenes among which we have been wandering to the gloomy regions of danger and endurance.

Though we have left more than half the characters in *Vanity Fair* unnoticed, our review of it has extended to almost an unwarrantable length. Our defence is, that we have been reviewing one of the most remarkable books of this age—a work which is as sure of immortality as ninety-nine hundredths of modern novels are sure of annihilation.

Pendennis has generally been thought inferior to *Vanity Fair*, and we are not inclined to dispute the verdict of the public. It wants the grand historical background of *Vanity Fair*. Mr. Thackeray never was more happily inspired than when he removed his theatre to Belgium. Every reader will admit that the events in Brussels are those which are the most strongly imprinted on his memory. Every one recollects, as well as if he had witnessed them, the perplexities of Lady Barchin, the undaunted self-possession of Becky, and the terrors of Joseph Sedley. But it is not merely to the exquisite truth with which these scenes are imagined that they owe their apparent reality. The solid foundation of fact by which all that is invention is supported, gives to it a stability which no pure fictions can possess. We know that thousands must have been startled at their mid-day meal, like Sedley and Mrs. O'Dowd by the dull distant mutterings of Quatre Bras. We know that tens of thousands felt Amelia's terrors when the cannon of Waterloo began to roar. Every Scotchman who visited the British Institution last year, and admired Drummond's charming picture of John Knox bringing home his second wife, felt what probability was given to its imaginary details by the curious gable ends and projecting windows and outside staircase of the still existing house at the head of the Netherbow, which the serious bridal procession is reaching.

It has been objected to the historical novel that it carries untruth on the face of it. First, because we already know all that can be known of the departed great, and feel that any additional actions or speeches must be attributed to them falsely. And secondly, be-

cause the reader has always formed to himself a conception of the language and conduct of every historical person in whom he is interested, and is disgusted when the author's conception of them differs, as it almost always must, from his own.

There is much foundation for these objections, and Mr. Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair*, has skilfully avoided them, by excluding from his novel historical characters, though he admits historical events. He has not given us a sketch, or even a side-view, of any actor in the great drama of 1815, whose name was ever heard of before. Isidor and Pauline, and the O'Dowds and Regulus, are all the delightful creations of the author. But we know that there must have been such persons in Brussels, in June 1815, that they must have witnessed the wonders of that memorable month, and that they must have talked and acted in the same manner, though not quite so amusingly, as their representatives are made to do in the pages of *Vanity Fair*. Now all this is wanting in *Pendennis*. As far as can be inferred from any historical allusions, it might have been written at any time during the present, or indeed during the last century. The old and the young, the Londoners and the provincials, all act and talk as if the fortunes of the country had no connection with theirs. Even the professional writers deal with politics with the impartiality of indifference. They put one in mind of Chatterton's computation on a great man's death: "Lost, by not being able to dedicate to him, ten guineas; gained, by writing his Life, £12. Am glad he is dead, by thirty shillings."

Pendennis is further distinguished from *Vanity Fair* by possessing a hero. Arthur Pendennis, who fills that office, is the only child of a retired apothecary, of an old but reduced family. He loses his father at sixteen, and from that time is educated, or rather supported, under the care of a weak, affectionate mother, one of the tender, generous incapables whom Mr. Thackeray delights in painting, because he paints them well. He lives at home with her and a nominal tutor; falls in love with an actress, who jilts him when she finds that he has nothing in possession, and only £500 a-year in prospect; and is removed to the University, where he becomes a fast young man, runs in debt, and is plucked. He retires to his native village, lives idly with his mother and his cousin (the good heroine of the piece), after some love-passages, takes refuge in the Temple as a law-student, is disgusted by the study, and adopts literature as a profession. He succeeds as a magazine writer, novelist, and minor poet; and partly as a *littérateur*, and partly through the patronage of his uncle, an antiquated beau, gets admission into the world of fashion. His mother's death puts him

in possession of his patrimony, and after some more abortive love-making, he marries his cousin and settles in the country.

Along this not very interesting biography is strung a garland of portraits and incidents, conceived with Mr. Thackeray's wonderful fertility of invention, and executed with his equally wonderful mastery of outline and color.

One of the most amusing of these portraits is the actress, Pendennis's juvenile flame — Miss Costigan, or, to use her *nom de théâtre*, the Fotheringay. Mr. Thackeray gives to her a splendid person, — after the model of Gibson's Puella Capuana, whom indeed she resembles intellectually, — industry, good sense, and good tendencies, but absolutely no imagination, and therefore the torpidity of feeling which generally follows from that defect. She has taken to the stage as the best means of supporting herself and her drunken Irish father; accepts blindly the instructions of one Bows, a clever dramatic teacher, the leader of the orchestra; practises them with unremitting diligence, and becomes, in the parts which she has thus studied, a fine actress from pure memory. The courtship is eminently entertaining; but still more so its conclusion, when Captain Costigan discovers and exposes to his daughter the real circumstances of Pendennis.

The interlocutors are the father and daughter and Bows, a hump-backed little old man, who, it must be recollected, is himself in love with the Fotheringay.

"O Emilee!" cried the Captain, "that boy whom I loved as the boy of mee bosom is only a scoundthrel, and a deceiver, mee poor girl:" and he looked in the most tragical way at Mr. Bows, opposite; who, in his turn, gazed somewhat anxiously at Miss Costigan.

"He! pooh! Sure the poor lad's as simple as a schoolboy," she said. "All them children write verses and nonsense."

"He's been acting the part of a viper to this fireside, and a traitor in this familie," cried the Captain. "I tell ye he's no better than an impostor."

"What has the poor fellow done, papa?" asked Emily.

"Done? He has deceived me in the most atrocious manner," Miss Emily's papa said. "He has trifled with your affections, and outraged my own fine feelings. He has represented himself as a man of property, and it tuorns out that he is no better than a beggar. Haven't I often told ye he had two thousand a year? He's a pauper, I tell ye, Miss Costigan: a dependant upon the bountee of his mother, a good woman, who may marry again, who's likely to live for ever, and who has but five hundred a year.

Milly looked very grave and thoughtful, rubbing with bread crumb a pair of ex-white satin shoes, intending to go mad upon them next Tuesday in Ophelia. "Sure if he's no money, there's no use marrying him, papa," she said sententiously.

"Why did the villain say he was a man of prawpettee?" asked Costigan.

"The poor fellow always said he was poor," answered the girl. "'Twas you would have it he was rich, papa, — and made me agree to take him."

"He should have been explicit and told us his income, Milly," answered the father. "A young fellow who rides a blood mare, and makes presents of shawls and bracelets is an impostor if he has no money."

"And so poor Arthur has no money?" sighed out Miss Costigan, rather plaintively. "Poor lad, he was a good lad too: wild and talking nonsense, with his verses and pothry and that, but a brave, generous boy, and indeed, I liked him — and he liked me too," she added rather softly, and rubbing away at the shoe.

"Why don't you marry him if you like him so?" Mr. Bows said rather savagely. "He is not more than ten years younger than you are. His mother may relent, and you might go and live and have enough at Fair Oaks Park. Why not go and be a lady? I could go on with the fiddle, and the General live on his half-pay. Why don't you marry him? You know he likes you."

"There's others that likes me as well, Bows, that has no money, and that's old enough," Miss Milly said.

"Yes, d—— it," said Bows with a bitter curse — "that are old enough and poor enough and fools enough for anything."

"There's old fools and young fools too. You've often said so, you silly man," the imperious beauty said with a conscious glance at the old gentleman. "If Pendennis has not enough money to live upon, it's folly to talk about marrying him: and that's the long and short of it." (Vol. i. pp. 109, 110, 111.)

The contrast between the humdrum Miss Costigan and the impassioned Fotheringay is most amusing; but in justice to the charming profession to which she belongs, we feel bound to express some doubt whether really fine acting can be the result of mere memory and unintelligent imitation. There are indeed great authorities in Mr. Thackeray's favor. Johnson said of Pritchard, that she was a vulgar idiot, that her playing was quite mechanical, and that she no more thought of reading the play out of which her part was taken, than a shoemaker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather of which he is making a pair of shoes is cut. And Diderot has written an essay to prove that perfect self-possession and cold insensibility to the emotions which he represents, are essential to a great actor. "Such an actor," he says, "is the same in every representation, and always equally perfect. All is prepared, all is learned by heart. His passion has its beginning, its middle, and its end. The same accents, the same positions, the same gestures are repeated. If there be any difference, the last representation, being the most studied, is the best. You ask me," he continues, "whether these plain-

tive tones, these half-stifled sobs, in which a despairing mother seems to pour forth her inmost soul, can be the result of no real emotion? Unquestionably, I answer; and the proof is, that they form part of a system of declamation — that they have been elaborated by long study — that to be properly uttered they have been repeated a hundred times — that every time the actor listened to his own voice — that he is listening to it now — and that his skill consists not in feeling an emotion, but in imitating its external signs. Those screams of grief are noted in his memory; those gestures of despair have been laboriously prepared. He has fixed in his own mind the precise time when he is to weep. This trembling voice, these half-uttered, half-stifled words, these quivering limbs, these trembling knees — all is pure memory, a lesson carefully learned and accurately repeated; a sublime deception, which the actor knows to be a deception while he is executing it; which wearies his body, but does not disturb his mind." — *Correspondance Littéraire de Grimm et Diderot*, Oct. 1770.

It must be remembered, however, that a French tragedy differs essentially from the dramatic representation which goes by that name in England. So much so, that in the essay from which we have been quoting, Diderot admits that a man who can act Shakspeare perfectly, is in all probability absolutely incapable of rendering Racine, "ne sait pas le premier mot de la déclamation d'une scène de Racine." It is probable that things so different as French and English acting may require different habits of mind, and different modes of study and execution; and that the long tirades of Phédre may be best declaimed by an actor who is really indifferent, and merely simulates passion, while the rapid natural dialogue of Shakspeare must be felt in order to be adequately expressed. And absolutely, without denying the possibility of the mechanical acting of Pritchard and Miss Costigan, we must affirm also the compatibility of the deepest real emotion with the most vivid representation of it. Every one who had the happiness to be in the stage-box when Jenny Lind pulled to pieces the rose in the *Sonnambula*, saw real tears running down her cheeks. And it is known that she declared that when on the stage she never saw the audience; and that if she ever thought of their presence, it spoiled the truth of her acting. All the great performers that occur to our recollection, have enjoyed the dangerous privileges and have been subject to the painful joys of the poetic temperament.

One of the most finished portraits is that of the gentlemanlike parasite Major Penden-  
nis. Perhaps we ought rather to call him a tuft-hunter than a parasite. That word is generally used to signify a man who fawns on the

rich for a subsistence. Now this, Major Penden-  
nis does not. His object is not a subsistence, the means which he uses are not fawning, nor is mere money the object of his adoration. He despises vulgar untitled opulence as much as he does vulgar untitled genius. His idol is not wealth, but fashion. To a certain extent his worship is disinterested; that is to say, it is paid to his patrons for their own sakes. He desires from them no favor except to be received into their society. He suns himself in the eyes of a man of fashion like a lover in those of his mistress. This state of feeling, familiar as it is to us, seems to have been unknown to the Greeks and to the Romans. The classical parasite was in search of something solid. He cringed for a dinner or a sportula, and cared little for the degradation by which he obtained them. Gross flattery was his readiest instrument; and as that was most palatable to the vulgarst minds, the vulgarst of the rich were those to whom he was most desirous to pay court.

The objects of the modern tuft-hunter are less substantial. The values for which he bar-  
ters his independence are, to use the language of political economy, immaterial. Familiarity with the great is, with him, not the means but the end. All that he asks from them is their acquaintance. All the use that he makes of the acquaintance of one is to serve as a passport to that of another. In a society so vast and so changing as that of the English aristocracy, this pursuit, when adopted by a man who begins from the bottom, has the great advantage of being inexhaustible. He may grow old, as Major Pendenis does, in a constant process of climbing and balancing himself; sometimes rising a little higher, sometimes falling a little back; one day making good a lodgment in a new great house; another, losing a valuable *entrée* by the death, or the ruin, or the caprice of the governor of the fortress — until at length he closes a long life, diligently and successfully employed, without a friend or even an intimate, without having done anything, or written anything, or said anything that can be remembered, but the undoubted possessor of a visiting-list great in its quantity and irreproachable in its quality.

At the same time it must be allowed that a successful tuft-hunter cannot be a commonplace man,

"Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est."

As he succeeds by pleasing, he must possess the arts of pleasing. And as he has to exercise them upon persons whom familiarity with the most cultivated society has rendered fastidious, he must possess those arts in an eminent degree. He must have good manners and considerable education; he must talk well

and listen well. He must enjoy a good temper, or be able to control a bad one. All these qualities Mr. Thackeray has given to the Major, and he has added to them courage, decision, presence of mind, and sagacity. And yet Major Pendennis does not obtain, and is not intended to obtain, our esteem. The frivolousness of the purposes for which they are employed, makes his talents and even his virtues contemptible. The reader cannot respect a man who does not respect himself, whose self-esteem depends altogether on the verdict of others, who is content to shine with borrowed light and to be splendid in borrowed plumes.

Mr. Thackeray has usually two heroines, a good one and a bad one: one to refuse the hero, the other to marry him. The bad heroine of Pendennis, Miss Blanche Amory, is a picture of great merit, even taken alone, but still more when compared and contrasted with her predecessor, Becky Sharp. At first sight, the features appear to be the same. Both are utterly heartless, both are utterly unscrupulous. The ruling passion of each is vanity, and each pursues her objects without the slightest regard to the rights, or the wishes, or the feelings of any one else. Each is clever and accomplished. They look, in short, at a distance, like twins. And yet, when we come to examine the details of the conduct of each of them, we find them not only dissimilar, but contrasted. Becky is a universal favorite; Blanche is uniformly detested. Becky is frank and simple; Blanche is a lump of affectation. Becky's subjects are faithful to her; Blanche's victims take the first opportunity of escaping from her. The seminal difference—the seed from which all the minor differences spring—is this: Mr. Thackeray has infused a strong dose of common sense into Becky, and a strong dose of folly into Blanche. Each is fond of power. Becky obtains her influence by the slow, sure process of being useful and agreeable. She seduces Miss Crawley, the rich woman of the world, by flattery and wit; old Sir Pitt Crawley, her brother, the bearish, loutish, country squire, by entering into all his schemes, correcting his blunders, and managing his whole household. When she quits him for a short visit to his sister, he follows to implore her immediate return. "I want you," he says; "I can't git on without you. I didn't see what it was till you went away. The house all goes wrong. It's not the same place. All my accounts has got muddled agin. You must come back. Do come back! dear Becky, do come!" The female favorite of the father is seldom that of the son; but she subjugates Sir Pitt the Second as effectually as Sir Pitt the First. She reveals to him the secret of his own talents and virtues; proves to him that he has undervalued himself, and is still more under-

valued by his wife; and sends him home, after every visit, thinking to himself how much she admires him, and how much he deserves to be admired.

Such are the tactics of Becky. Blanche obtains her power by the coarse and easy instrument of fear. She domineers by teasing and frightening. Her *modus operandi* is well explained in an early dialogue between Sir Francis Clavering (her step-father) and Captain Strong, his resident companion and man of business.

"I say, Strong," one day the Baronet said, as the pair were conversing after dinner over the billiard table, and that great unbosomer of secrets, a sear; "I say, Strong, I wish your wife was dead."

"So do I.—That's a cannon, by Jove.—But she won't; she'll live for ever—you see if she don't. Why do you wish her off the hooks, Frank, my boy?" asked Captain Strong.

"Because then you might marry Missy. She ain't bad looking. She'll have ten thousand, and that's a good bit of money for such a poor devil as you," drawled out the other gentleman. "And gad, Strong, I hate her worse and worse every day. I can't stand her, Strong, by gad I can't."

"I wouldn't take her at twice the figure," Captain Strong said, laughing. "I never saw such a little devil in my life."

"I should like to poison her," said the sententious Baronet; "by Jove I should."

"Why, what has she been at now?" asked his friend.

"Nothing particular," answered Sir Francis; "only her old tricks. That girl has such a knack of making every body miserable, that hang me it's quite surprising. Last night she sent the governess crying away from the dinner table. Afterwards, as I was passing Frank's room, I heard the poor little beggar howling in the dark, and found his sister had been frightening his soul out of his body, by telling him stories about the ghost that's in the house. At lunch she gave my lady a turn; and though my wife's a fool, she's a good soul—I'm hanged if she ain't."

"What did Missy do to her?" Strong asked.

"Why hang me, if she didn't begin talking about the late Amory, my predecessor," the Baronet said with a grin.—"She got some picture out of the Keepsake, and said she was sure it was like her dear father. She wanted to know where her father's grave was. Hang her father! Whenever Miss Amory talks about him, Lady Clavering always bursts out crying: and the little devil will talk about him in order to spite her mother. To-day, when she began, I got in a confounded rage, said I was her father, and—and that sort of thing; and then, Sir, she took a shy at me."

"And what did she say about you, Frank?" Mr. Strong, still laughing, inquired of his friend and patron.

"Gad, she said I wasn't her father; that I wasn't fit to comprehend her; that her father

must have been a man of genius, and fine feelings, and that sort of thing: whereas I had married her mother for money."

"Well, didn't you?" asked Strong.

"It don't make it any the pleasanter to hear because it's true, don't you know?" Sir Francis Clavering answered. "I ain't a literary man and that; but I ain't such a fool as she makes me out. I don't know how it is, but she always manages to — to put me in the hole, don't you understand? She turns all the house round her in her quiet way. I wish she was dead, Ned." (Vol. i. pp. 225, 226.)

Becky's weapon is as sharp as Blanche's, perhaps sharper, and she is quite ready to use it when the necessity occurs; but she keeps it in reserve for that necessity; never draws it except in self-defence; and takes care that the wound, though it may smart, shall not rankle. She despises those about her too much to feel lasting resentment; is always willing to shake hands with a baffled assailant; and generally manages that her adversary shall be as placable as she is herself. Neither Blanche nor Becky cares anything about truth; but Becky knows the value of falsehood, and that its power is easily worn out by promiscuous use. She reserves it therefore for great occasions, and tells the truth unless something considerable is to be got by lying. Blanche lies without any motive except the exercise of her ingenuity, and thus wastes her mendacity to no purpose.

Neither Blanche nor Becky cares about her friends, but Blanche adopts and throws them away from mere caprice. She is constantly forming useless intimacies, and turning them into mischievous enmities. Becky bestows her affection only on those whom she thinks worthy of it; that is to say, on those whom she hopes to make her instruments. *If* she finds them useful, and *while* she finds them useful, she "grapples them to her soul with hooks of steel." When they become useless, she lets them go, but quietly and silently, without any breach, so that if at a future time they should become serviceable, as is the case in one or two memorable instances, she may be able at once to resume them. Blanche and Becky are both fond of admiration, but Becky knows that it is not to be obtained by asking for it. She resolves to be simple and unaffected; and being a consummate actress, she succeeds. Blanche is always imploring attention, always trying on a new manner or a new character. "She drags her shoulders," says one of her intended victims, "out of her dress; she never lets her eyes alone; she goes about simpering and ogling, like a French waiting-maid." The inside of Becky is diseased enough, but the outside is polished, consistent, and natural. Blanche's exterior is in as bad taste as her interior is corrupt. It is all fantastic, gaudy, glaring, and ill-assorted.

Becky is a simple character; Blanche an inconsistent one.

As we use these words in a technical sense, we shall explain them at some length; and we hope that our explanation may throw light on that portion of poetical imitation — by far the most important portion — which has human nature for its subject.

Fictitious characters may, we think, be conveniently divided into three classes — the Simple, the Mixed, and the Inconsistent.

By simple characters, we mean the persons to whom no qualities are attributed by the poet, except those which are subservient to one another and coöperate in the main work which the person in question has to do. By mixed characters, we mean the persons who are endowed by him with different attributes, independent of one another, some of which are essential to the principal parts which they have to perform, and others have no connection with them. By inconsistent characters, we mean those who possess discordant qualities — qualities which counteract, or modify, or even neutralize, one another. The test whether a character is simple, mixed or inconsistent is, to try what would be the effect of removing any one of its attributes, if that removal would leave it incomplete, unfit to execute the duties assigned to it by the poet, it is a simple character. If the qualities supposed to be removed would not be missed, the character is mixed. If that removal would render the rest of the character more harmonious, more efficient for the performance of any one or more of its parts, it is not only mixed, but also inconsistent.

There are no simple characters in real life. Nature varies almost infinitely her attributes, and gives to every man innumerable qualities, some of which are independent of one another, and others are discordant. All her characters are both mixed and inconsistent; and it is this mixture and inconsistency that renders them distinct. Every human being belongs to so many thousand different classes, that no two individuals, possessing precisely the same qualities, in precisely the same proportions, have ever been found. The poet has not space for these details. The greater part of his characters are simple, because they are wanted only for some particular purpose; they are the Fortis Gyas, fortisque Cloanthus, and Fidus Achates of his muster roll. All that we wish to know of Banquo, Shakspeare tells us; namely, that he is brave. All that we hear of Duncan is that he is kind. We should think it impertinent if some scenes were added to Macbeth, for the purpose of showing what kind of a husband Banquo was, or what were the favorite amusements of Duncan. Even of the more highly finished characters, the greater part are simple. Ulysses is a simple character.



The elements of which he is composed are, strong domestic and patriotic affections, patience, dissimulation, prudence, sagacity, presence of mind, fertility of resource, intrepidity, and daring amounting almost to rashness. Every one of these qualities was necessary to bring him from Ogygia to Ithaca, and to enable him to plan and to effect the destruction of the suitors. They form the whole of his character, so far as Homer has revealed it to us. Richard the Third is a simple character. Even his gaiety could not be abstracted from him without leaving a gap in the general outline. His wit is necessary to show his remorseless unscrupulousness, his unflinching audacity. It is provoked by his crimes. It is most brilliant when he is planning or executing, or reflecting on some atrocity. Hypocrisy, treachery, and murder are his sport. He prepares his crimes with satisfaction,—he looks back to them with merriment. It is not that he has any pleasure in human suffering, but that he is utterly indifferent to it. He does not torture, he only kills, and kills only those who are in his way. But as obstacle after obstacle, that is to say, life after life, that rose between him and the crown, is removed, his delight breaks out in the bitter yet playful humor which makes him at once the most detestable and the most amusing of villains.

Perhaps the finest mixed character ever drawn is Henry, as Prince Hal and as Henry the Fifth. His levity and dissipation, pushed, as they are, almost to dissoluteness, have no connection with his wisdom and courage. If the ludicrous scenes in the two parts of Henry the Fourth had never been written, we should not have felt their loss. The remainder would have formed a great tragedy, in which Prince Henry would have been a well-drawn, grand, and simple character. If the serious scenes had been lost, we should have had a most amusing comedy, with Falstaff and Hal as its heroes. And yet the character is not one of those to which we have given the name of inconsistent. The baser and the higher qualities of Henry do not interfere with one another. He throws off at once the trifter when he is required to rise into the hero, and the hero when he is at leisure to subside into the trifter. The reader perceives no incongruity. He feels that the same desire for excitement, indifference to consequences, and light-hearted audacity, seduce Hal to indulge his taste for humor at Gadshill and the Boar's Head, and impel Henry to seek glory by encountering Percy at Shrewsbury and all France at Agincourt.

Hotspur, like Henry, is tragi-comic. His wit and his humor almost rival those of Falstaff. They are most brilliant on the gravest occasions. He jests in a stormy interview with the king,—he jests when he is dividing Eng-

land with his co-conspirators,—he is never more amusing than when he takes leave of his wife before his last fatal battle. And yet we are inclined to class him among simple characters. His gaiety is the mere ebullition of a bold, self-relying, impetuous, ambitious temper, which exults in contest and danger. His delight, as the struggle approaches, foams out in taunt, and jest, and mockery, but his levity does not influence his conduct. Levity is an element in the disposition of Prince Hal, but only in the manner of Hotspur.

We now come to inconsistent characters. It may be as well to state expressly, what perhaps is obvious, that by an inconsistent character we do not mean what is generally expressed by those words—a character to which incompatible attributes are assigned. Such characters cannot exist in nature, and of course ought to be banished from fiction. We repeat, that by an inconsistent character we mean one of which the elements, though compatible, are repugnant. The great painter of inconsistent characters is Pope. They suit his delight in contrast and antithesis. One of the most finished is that of Wharton.

"Thus with each gift of nature and of art,  
And wanting nothing but an honest heart,  
Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt;  
And most contemptible, to shun contempt;  
His Passion still, to covet gen'ral praise,  
His Life, to forfeit it a thousand ways;  
A constant Bounty, which no friend has made;  
An angel Tongue, which no man can persuade;  
A fool, with more of Wit than all mankind,  
Too rash for thought, for action too refin'd:  
A Tyrant to the wife his heart approves;  
A Rebel to the very king he loves;  
He dies, sad putcase of each church and state,  
And, harder still! flagitious, yet not great."  
(*Moral Essays*, Ep. i. p. 193.)

Don Quixote is a boldly-drawn inconsistent character. He is a man of great good sense, and knowledge of books and of the world. If romances of chivalry had never been written he would have passed the whole of his life as he passed the greater part of it,—a respected country gentleman, dividing his time between literature, field sports and society. But his head is turned by stories of knight-errantry. He devotes himself to their study, admits implicitly all their absurdities, and, while he remains sensible and sagacious on all other subjects, on this alone he is mad. He believes himself to be living in the times of Amadis de Gaul, and Florismarte of Hyrcania, expects adventures like theirs, and makes their conduct his model. So far as these delusions extend, his bodily and his mental senses are perverted. He takes windmills for giants, sheep for armies, potherouses for castles, and Maritornes for a princess. When out of his armor he is just and humane; but when oc-

cupied as a knight-errant, he thinks it is his duty to require any passenger whom he meets to admit the peerless beauty of Dulcinea, and to murder those who refuse. As a philosopher, he reasons wisely on the theory of government, on the necessity of penal laws, and the duty of submission to authority: as a knight, he attacks the king's officers, breaks the chain of galley-slaves, and lets loose a band of wretches who have just confessed to him the justice of their sentences. With wonderful skill he is made to pass and repass from sanity to madness. He sits before Master Peter's puppet-show, a quiet, intelligent spectator, criticises the management of the story, and objects to the introduction of bells as an anachronism; but no sooner is he interested in the scene than he believes in its reality, rushes at the little theatre to the rescue of Melisendra, cuts to pieces the hostile puppets, would have beheaded the showman himself if he had not ducked under his stage, and exclaims in the exultation of his triumph "Would to God that this could have been seen by all the despisers of knight-errantry! Where would the brave Gayferos and the beautiful Melisendra now have been if I had not been present?" The showman and Sancho convince him that he has taken puppets for men; he agrees to pay for the damage, and sits down with Master Peter and the innkeeper to compute it. King Marsilio, who has lost a head, is valued at four reals; Charlemagne, whose crown is split, at three: and for the fair Melisendra, whose nose is gone, Master Peter asks five. At the name of Melisendra, Don Quixote relapses into his delusion:—"Don't play your tricks upon me," he cries; "Melisendra must have been safe in Paris an hour ago. I watched her horse as she was making her escape: he was flying rather than galloping!"

For the perfection of the inconsistent character (as, indeed, for the perfection of every other) we must go to Shakspeare. One of the finest, among the many that he has drawn, is Othello. He is a union not merely of dissimilar qualities, but of dissimilar natures. He is a civilized barbarian. All that we know of his birth is, that it is "fetched from men of royal siege." How or when he became a Christian we are not told; but it is certain that he must have passed his childhood in a harem, acquiring with his earliest impressions the jealousy and suspicion respecting women, and the domestic despotism of a Mohammedan court. His youth and manhood are military; and we find him at the opening of the play, "somewhat declined into the vale of years," a grave and dignified soldier. He is

"The noble Moor, whom the full senate  
Call all-in-all sufficient—the noble nature  
Whom passion cannot shake; whose solid virtue

The shot of accident or dart of chance  
Can neither graze nor pierce."

All the barbarian is obliterated. His behavior during the first two acts justifies Lodovico's praise. Nothing can be more calm or more polished. When, within one hour of his marriage, he is summoned before the senate, he does not resent the contumely or even the violence of Brabantio; he pleads his cause with consummate moderation and skill, accepts the command of Cyprus with modest self-reliance, obeys cheerfully the order of instant departure, and, without a shadow of suspicion, places Desdemona in Iago's hands to follow him.

The very morning after their arrival at Cyprus, Iago darkly hints to him a doubt as to the firmness of Desdemona's virtue. He accuses her of nothing actually wrong, but states plausible grounds why she should be watched. The suspicion acts on Othello like a specific poison. It sets on fire all the old Mohammedan tendency to jealousy, which a European life seems to have eradicated. His barbarian nature reappears. At first his habits of civilization combat it.

He proposes to act as becomes a great Venetian noble; to inquire into his wife's conduct; and, if Iago's suspicions prove unfounded, to forget them; if they are confirmed, to separate himself from Desdemona,—

He says,

I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove.  
If I do prove her haggard,  
I'll whistle her off, and let her down the wind:  
Away at once with love or jealousy.

Desdemona enters, and he exclaims,—

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself! —  
I'll not believe it.

They go together to a great dinner, at the end of which Othello and Iago meet again.

By this time the barbarian has got the upper hand. He demands, indeed, from Iago proof of Desdemona's guilt, but in the meantime assumes it. Iago tells him, by way of proof, that lately he lay with Cassio, and heard him exclaim in his sleep,—

Sweet Desdemona,  
Let us hide our loves.  
Oh, cursed fate, that gave thee to the Moor!

The falsehood of this story was obvious. Cassio and Iago had parted the very evening of the marriage; they had arrived at Cyprus in separate ships the day before this conversation took place, and the intervening night had been the busy one which was filled by the drunken quarrel and Cassio's disgrace.

Othello swallows it with savage credulity. He no longer thinks of inquiry, or of separation. He is again the Arab or the Bedouin of his youth, and no conduct, except such as might fit a Bedouin or an Arab, occurs to him.

He cries,

Oh blood, Iago, blood!

Within these three days let me hear thee say,  
That Cassio's not alive. I will withdraw,  
To furnish me with some swift means of death  
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

The last words are remarkable. Othello has so thoroughly forgotten the habits of civilized life, that he does not see that, after having murdered his wife, the daughter of a Venetian senator, and assassinated Cassio, a man of high rank in the republic, he cannot remain governor of Cyprus. Well may Desdemona exclaim,—

My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him.  
Were he in favor, as in humor, altered.

From thence until the very last scene the savage in him reigns triumphant. He does not preserve even the outward proprieties of his station, but insults and strikes his wife in the presence of the envoy from the senate.

But the instant that he has satiated his revenge, the spirit from the desert seems to be appeased by the sacrifice, and quits him. He now "knows that his act shows horrible and grim." He listens to the proofs of Desdemona's innocence, apologizes frankly to Cassio, and sits in judgment on his own folly and crime. The horror of his situation, instead of disturbing, quiets him. He resumes the calm dignity of a great Venetian leader. Lodovico proposes to carry him away a close prisoner for trial. Othello makes no direct answer to the threat, but draws in a few clear and singularly unimpassioned lines, a short outline "of these unlucky deeds," and then retires from the "extreme perplexity" in which he is involved by the only exit that is left to him, a resolute and not undignified suicide.

Mr. Thackeray's Blanche is, as we said before, an inconsistent character. Her desire of power is constantly interfering with her desire of sympathy. She cannot help teasing those whom she wishes to please. In her pursuit of immediate admiration she loses permanent esteem, and becomes a plaything when she aims at being an idol. When she sits between two admirers, she flirts alternately with each, and thus betrays to them both the emptiness of her kindness. Becky, we repeat, is a simple character. Numerous as her qualities are, they are not discordant. Not one

of them could be taken from her without damaging her powers of worldly advancement.

Rawdon Crawley is one of Mr. Thackeray's best inconsistent characters. He is a gambler, indeed a blackleg, and would be an actual swindler if a swindler could be tolerated in society. He approaches as near to swindling as the law will allow. He preys on the young and the inexperienced, contracts debts which he knows never can be paid, and lies whenever it suits his convenience. Yet this degraded nature has its amiable and its respectable side. He is fond of his wife and of his child. He is brave, and he is grateful. He has an honor of his own, which, though its province is narrow, reigns there supreme. He knows that his only chance of escaping ruin is through the friendship of Lord Steyne. But the instant that he suspects how that friendship has been purchased, he breaks with his patron, sends back, poor as he is, the thousand pounds which he believes to have been Steyne's present to Becky, and is with difficulty restrained from shooting him.

Arthur Pendennis is a mixed character. He is a poet grafted on a dandy. So far as he is a dandy, he is vain, conceited, and extravagant. So far as he is a poet, he is inflammable and inconstant, easily attracted and easily repelled. Having scarcely any seriously adopted opinions, or principles, or plans, he is at the mercy of those around him. It is a defect in the story that his conduct recurs in a sort of circle. He falls in love with an actress, and is jilted; makes love to Blanche, is well received by her, and then cast off, and to please his mother offers himself to Laura; she refuses him, and so ends the first volume.

In the second volume he falls in love with a porter's daughter, and is cured by a fever; to please his uncle he proposes himself again to Blanche, and is engaged to her. She jilts him again, and again he offers himself of Laura; and as it was necessary to end the novel, this time she accepts him.

There is nothing very attractive in such an outline, but many of the details are full of beauty. The wonder with which, after he is cured of an attachment, he revisits its former object, is admirably described. So is his last courtship of Blanche at Tunbridge Wells, where the *blasé* dandy and *blasée* flirt, after mutual attempts, all ineffectual, to be fond and sentimental, confess to one another that the marriage is not of their own seeking, but has been arranged for them by their mammas and uncles, and that they must submit to it like a good little boy and girl.

We have said nothing about the tragical parts of the story—about Colonel Altamont and his frightful secret and mysterious threats;

or Warrington's discarded wife. They are tacked so slightly to the comic portions, that they might easily be detached altogether. And if Mr. Thackeray should think fit hereafter to lighten *Pendennis*, and so improve its chances of floating down to posterity, we recommend that these be the portions of its rigging that are first cut away.

Esmond is a reproduction of the manners, feelings, thoughts, and even style which prevailed from 180 to 140 years ago. It is a wonderful *tour de force*. Without doubt, one of the charms of art is the triumph over difficulty. But the triumph must not be a barren one. The value of what is gained must bear a considerable proportion to the labor that has been expended. The epic in twenty-four books, from each of which a letter was eliminated, was not more but less pleasing than if the author had allowed himself free use of the alphabet. Taken at the best, the task of a novelist is difficult. It is no easy thing to invent a plausible story, a story which shall have a beginning, a middle, and an end, — a beginning which shall raise expectation, a middle which shall continue it, and an end which shall satisfy it. Neither Richardson nor Fielding has succeeded in doing so more than once. It is less difficult, but still far from easy, to people that story with characters, distinct, natural and amusing; and to make them talk and act like the living models supplied by the author's experience. If to the obstacles which nature has thrown across his path, the poet thinks fit to add fresh ones of his own; if he builds up walls in order to jump over them, the reader always suspects that which is supplied to him is not the author's best; that some real merit which he would have enjoyed is sacrificed to an imaginary one which he does not care about.

Now the amount of the self-imposed burden which Mr. Thackeray has undertaken to bear may be estimated, when we consider how few have been the writers who have ventured to submit to it. For at least three thousand years poets have taken their principal characters from history or mythology. But they have seldom borrowed more than the names, and perhaps one or two of the most notorious adventures of their heroes. Everything else they have generally copied from what they saw around them. All Homer's men and women, whether they be Europeans or Asiatics, Greeks or Phœnicians, Trojans or allies, speak the same language, use the same weapons, amuse themselves with the same games, worship the same gods, believe in the same legends, are in fact identical in habits and manners. All those of Virgil, whether natives of Ilium, or Carthage, or Sicily, or Latium, are Romans of the Augustan age. Four great tragic poets, perhaps the four

greatest that ever wrote, have brought on the stage Theseus. In the *Œdipus Coloneus*, he is an Athenian statesman; in the *Supplikes*, an Athenian rhetorician; in *Phœdre* a courtier of Louis Quatorze; and in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, a highly educated English gentleman. Not one of these great writers thought himself bound to reproduce the Theseus of tradition, half-savage, half-divine, the first cousin and imitator of Hercules, who roamed over Greece destroying robbers, killing wild beasts, and carrying off women; a mixture of giant and knight-errant; raised, according to one legend, for his virtues, to be a god; according to another, for his crimes seated for ever in hell. Even Walter Scott, though, in order to please critics who are intolerant of anachronisms, he endeavors to copy the manners and feelings of a past age, does not try to speak in its language or in its style. His events may be mediæval, but he relates them like any other novelist of the nineteenth century. Though the scene of *Rob Roy* is laid 140 years ago, and though Osbaldiston is his own biographer, he tells his story as if he had just finished his education in the new town of Edinburgh. The courage, the diligence, and the skill of Mr. Thackeray have enabled him to avoid this inconsistency. Colonel Esmond writes as one of the best of her wits might have written in the reign of Queen Anne.

We cannot, however, avoid thinking that this merit has been purchased too dearly. The reader feels always that he is listening to falsetto tones; that he is looking at the imitation of an imitation. If *Esmond* had been confined within as short limits, it might have taken rank with the "Defence of Natural Society." But a parody three volumes long becomes tiresome. We want the author to throw aside the fetters which impede his movements, though we require him to keep the costume which disguises his person. We wish to hear Jacob's own voice, though the hands be the hands of Esau.

The period at which Mr. Thackeray has laid his scene was scarcely a matter of choice, when once he had determined to imitate antiquated forms of thought and expression. Those who succeeded the wits of Queen Anne's days were moderns. Thomson, Goldsmith, Adam Smith, and Hume, all remembered Pope and Swift; but they wrote as we do; — better, perhaps, so far as they took more pains, but with no other perceptible difference. The giants, indeed, who ruled the literary world between the Reformation and the Restoration used a style and a language sufficiently different from our own; but they were unfit for domestic narrative. No one could have tolerated the loves of *Beatrix* and *Esmond* enveloped in the grand periods of

Bacon or Milton, or even in the quaint, loose verbiage of the Arcadia. The school which Mr. Thackeray has imitated was remote enough to be peculiar, and near enough for its peculiarities not to offend.

But that period had little else to recommend it. It was one to which every Englishman must look back with disgust. Up to the Restoration the English, at least in the higher classes, had been a serious people. Primogeniture as respects land, and the exclusion of the younger branches of even the greatest houses from nobility,—the happy accident from which so many of our peculiarities flow,—had prevented the existence among us of the idle, frivolous caste which, during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, formed the aristocracy of the greater part of the Continent; a caste excluded by its prejudices from commerce, from the bar, from medicine, and, except in its high dignities, from the church; and naturally led, with the exception of the small portion of it that could find employment in arms, to dedicate its ample leisure to place-hunting and amusement. From the Conquest until the Restoration, the rich and the noble of England had had duties to perform. The rich were great merchants or feudal proprietors; the noble were statesmen or soldiers; all the members of the younger branches, and the younger members of the eldest branch, who in France would have thronged the court of the sovereign, or lived in the *ruelles* of the capital, were actively engaged in business or in professions.

But during the sixty or seventy years which immediately followed the Restoration, London seems to have been the head-quarters of a fashionable crowd which, in numbers, in wealth, in idleness, in dissoluteness, in everything, in short, except education and refinement, rivalled the *grand monde* of Paris. Of course we cannot now dwell on the causes of this phenomenon. The increased wealth of the unemployed class was probably connected with the abolition of the feudal tenures, and the facilities thereby given to mortgages and sales, the increased occupation of land by tenants instead of by proprietors, the enormous augmentation of trade, and the large incomes, indeed the large fortunes, that could be made in the public service, or squeezed from the royal bounty. Its dissoluteness was partly a reaction against the austerities of Puritanism, and partly a coarse imitation of the polished dissipation of France; but it would probably have shown itself, even if there had been no Puritans and no French; in fact, it was the necessary result of wealth wanting occupation and literature. There were, of course, literary circles as brilliant as those of any other period, the circles in which the great writers of that age were formed; but everything shows that the mass of the fashion-

able world was then deplorably ignorant. The women knew nothing, and professed to know nothing. The men passed many of their mornings, and almost all their evenings, in clubs, and at the theatres; smoking, drinking, and playing at cards, or listening to stilted tragedies or indecent comedies.

This levity was made hideous by the intermixture of ferocity not more savage indeed, perhaps less so, than that of the previous century, but horrible in itself, and still more horrible as the cruelty of careless voluptuaries. A sanguinary penal code was enforced with unrelenting severity. Temple Bar and London Bridge were fringed with human heads. With not one-fourth of the present population, there were probably fifty times as many executions every year as there are now. The whippings of females, as well as of males, were perpetual, and were paraded up and down the most public thoroughfares; and yet these punishments were as inefficacious as they were cruel. The roads around London were beset by highwaymen; the streets were infested by footpads; amateurs in crime, who have been immortalized in "The Spectator," under the name of Mohocks, insulted and injured passengers by way of amusement. No one seems to have engaged in politics who was not sooner or later, and generally more than once, guilty of treason; the basest and the most unscrupulous traitors being those whom their crowns placed above the law. Duels were frequent and ferocious; the seconds fought as well as the principals, and victory was often obtained by treachery. Other aristocracies may have been more contemptible, but none can have been less attractive or amiable, than that of the English court from the return of Charles the Second down to the death of Queen Anne.

Over-indulgence, except indeed to the whimpering little goddess whom he deifies in every novel, is not Mr. Thackeray's weakness. His *dramatis personæ* are as black as their originals could have been. The only prominent male character who is not an habitual drunkard is the hero. Three Lord Castlewoods are introduced. The first is described as passing his early life abroad, where he was remarkable only for duelling, vice, and play,—and where he marries and then deserts the mother of the hero. He passes his middle age in London, a hanger-on of ordinaries, and a brawler about Alsatia and Whitefriars; marries, during his first wife's life, an old maid with money; and is killed at the battle of the Boyne. The second is a drunken sensualist, who ill-treats and insults his wife, spoils his children, gambles away his property, and is killed in a duel. The third turns Roman Catholic, marries ill, quarrels with his own relations, and is left, at the end of the story, the slave of his wife's family of German adventurers.



The hero, of course, possesses the ordinary heroic qualities of courage, generosity, and affectionateness. But even *he* conspires for the purpose of occasioning a new revolution, though he strongly suspects that his success will be mischievous to his country. He is not seduced by the entreaties of any friend; he is not driven on by the blind, instinctive, spaniel-like loyalty, which leads a legitimist to throw his fortunes, his life, his family, and even his patriotism at the feet of him whom he adores as his sovereign. He is himself the originator of the scheme; he estimates calmly the results; "has his own forebodings as to what they may be, his usual sceptic doubts as to the benefit which may accrue to the country by bringing a tipsy young monarch back to it." The motive which, in spite of all these doubts and forebodings, impels him to endeavor to inflict, at the hazard of a civil war, such a master on his country, is merely the hope that by so doing he may please his cousin Beatrix Esmond, one of the heroines of the novel, a violent Tory, who for ten long years has been the object of Esmond's unsuccessful adoration. With no other object, he brings the Pretender in disguise to England, and conceals him in the house of his relation Lady Castlewood, the mother of Beatrix. His suspicions as to the worthlessness of his intended master increase during the journey, and are turned into convictions by the Prince's behavior as a guest. Still he perseveres, until the prince's attentions to Beatrix become marked. Then,

Horrible doubts and torments racked Esmond's soul. 'Twas a scheme of personal ambition, a daring stroke for a selfish end—he knew it. What cared he in his heart who was king? Were not his very sympathies and secret convictions on the other side—on the side of People, Parliament, Freedom?—And here was he engaged for a prince that had scarce heard the word liberty; that priests and women, tyrants by nature both, made a tool of. (Vol. iii. p. 234.)

Beatrix is sent into the country; and Esmond, having provided against this danger, resumes the conspirator, and passes a long day with the Prince, "writing proclamations and addresses to the country, to the Scots, to the clergy, to the people of London and England, announcing the arrival of the exiled descendant of three sovereigns, and his acknowledgment by his sister as heir to the throne." The Prince discovers the banishment of Beatrix, and resents it. "If I have garters to give away," he cries, "'tis to noblemen who are not so ready to think evil. Bring me a coach, and let me quit this place, or let the fair Beatrix return to it."

Esmond's loyalty is instantly suspended. He takes the Prince to a window looking into

Kensington Square, where the watchman is crying the hour; reminds his guest, the man whom he is endeavoring to make his sovereign, that £5,000 is offered by Parliament for his capture, points out to him how easily he could betray him; and adds, "by the Heaven that made me I would do so, if I thought the Prince, for his honor's sake, would not desist from insulting *ours*."

The Prince promises amendment, and Esmond continues as zealously as before to urge on the revolution. The Prince renews his attempts on Beatrix. Esmond breaks his sword, and renounces him. Detestable as most of the characters in the novel are, we do not recollect one to whom equal selfishness and wickedness are attributed. Even in France, demoralized as it has been by sixty years of revolutions, the most unprincipled *émulter* would not make one merely to gratify his mistress.

We have already mentioned Mr. Thackeray's practice of having a good and a bad heroine; the one to refuse the hero, the other to marry him. In Esmond they are mother and daughter, the daughter being the bad heroine who rejects, the mother the good heroine who accepts. We do not object to the mere disparity of age. Many a boy of eighteen has fallen in love with a woman of twenty-eight. But in this case a man of forty falls in love with a woman of about fifty,—a woman with whom he has lived in intimacy ever since he was a child, who was the confidant and approver for many years of his love for her own daughter, whom he has always considered, and wished to consider, as his mother. Such a plot is neither natural nor pleasing.

Both the heroines are well drawn. The whole work is full of praises of the mother, Lady Castlewood. Perhaps these are meant only to show the uxoriousness of Esmond; but if they express Mr. Thackeray's opinion as to the beauty of the portrait which he has painted, we feel bound to record our dissent. Lady Castlewood appears to us to be a woman with a strong sense of duty and religion, and a heart always overflowing with affection, and eager to receive it. But all is spoilt by violence of temper, and by a jealousy so irritable and so exclusive, that even Esmond, after their marriage, cannot venture in her presence to show his love for their daughter. "Her husband's love," says the daughter, Mrs. Warrington, "was a gift so precious, that she was for keeping it all, and could part with none of it, even to her daughter." Mr. Warrington affirms that their happiness in marriage was perfect. If that was true, colonel Esmond's standard of happiness must have been low, since it was conferred on him by a wife of strong feelings, irritable, suspicious temper,

quick sensibility, and indiscriminating, unrelenting jealousy.

One or two scenes from the first volume will illustrate her character. Her beauty has been somewhat impaired by small-pox, and her husband has neglected her for a Mrs. Marwood.

"'Twas after Jason left her, no doubt," Lady Castlewood said, with one of her smiles to young Esmond (who was reading to her a version of certain lines out of Euripides), that Medea became a learned woman, and a great enchantress."

"And she could conjure the stars out of heaven," the young tutor added, "but she could not bring Jason back again."

"What do you mean?" asked my lady, very angry.

"Indeed, I mean nothing," said the other, "save what I have read in books. What should I know about such matters? I have seen no woman save you and little Beatrix, and the parson's wife, and my late mistress, and your ladyship's woman here."

"The men who wrote your books," says my lady, "your Horaces, and Ovids, and Virgils, as far as I know of them, all thought ill of us, as all the heroes they wrote about used us basely. We were bred to be slaves always; and even of our own times, as you are still the only lawgivers, I think our sermons seem to say that the best woman is she who bears her master's chains most gracefully. 'Tis a pity there are no nunneries permitted by our church. Beatrix and I would fly to one, and end our days in peace there away from you."

"And is there no slavery in a convent?" says Esmond.

"At least if women are slaves there, no one sees them," answered the lady. "They do n't work in street gangs with the public to jeer at them; and if they suffer, they suffer in private. Here comes my lord home from hunting. Take away the books, my lord does not love to see them. Lessons are over for to-day, Mr. Tutor." And with a courtesy and a smile she would end this sort of colloquy. (Vol. i. pp. 204, 205, 206.)

Lord Castlewood next confides to Esmond his annoyances.

"Is a woman," he says, "never to forgive a husband who goes a tripping? Do you take me for a saint?"

"Indeed, Sir, I do not," says Harry with a smile.

"Since that time my wife is as cold as the statue at Charing Cross. I tell thee she has no forgiveness in her, Henry. Her coldness blights my whole life, and sends me to the punch-bowl, or driving about the country. My children are not mine but hers when we are together. 'Tis only when she is out of sight with her abominable cold glances, that they'll come to me, and that I dare to give them as much as a kiss; and that's why I take 'em and love 'em in other people's houses, Harry. 'I'm killed by the very virtue of that proud woman. Virtue! Give me the virtue that can forgive; give me the virtue

that thinks not of preserving itself, but of making other folks happy." (Vol. i. pp. 270, 271.)

Esmond fancies that this is a case for meditation; and ventured most gently, to hint to his adored mistress, that she was doing her husband harm by her ill opinion of him; and that the happiness of all the family depended upon setting her right.

"Have you ever heard me utter a word in my lord's disparagement?" She asked hastily, hissing out her words, and stamping her foot.

"Indeed, no," Esmond said, looking down.

"Are you come to me as his ambassador — You!" she continued.

"I would sooner see peace between you than anything else in the world," Harry answered, "and would go on any embassy that had that end."

"So you are my lord's go-between?" she went on, not regarding this speech. "You are sent to bid me back into slavery again, and inform me that my lord's favor is graciously restored to his hand-maid? He is weary of Covent Garden, is he, that he comes home and would have the fat-ted calf killed?"

"There's good authority for it, surely," said Esmond.

"For a son, yes; but my lord is not my son. It was he who broke our happiness down, and he bids me to repair it. I presume you have fulfilled your mission now, Sir. Perhaps you too, have learned to love drink, and to hiccup over your wine or punch; — which is your worship's favorite liquor? Perhaps you too put up at the Rose on your way through London, and have your acquaintances in Covent Garden. My services to you, Sir, to principal and ambassador, to master and — lacquey." (Vol. i. pp. 273 — 275.)

Beatrix is inconsistent in the sense in which we use that word. She has great excellencies and great defects, and her different qualities interfere with one another. She has courage, decision, presence of mind, and, for some purposes, self-command. She has intelligence, eloquence, wit, and knowledge of men and of things. This powerful machinery is directed by ambition and vanity, and driven by a strong will. But her pride is overbearing, her affections are capricious, her temper is irritable and wayward, and she inherits her mother's jealousy. She has a quick moral sense, a clear perception of the distinctions between virtue and vice, and a general wish to do right, and yet she is perpetually doing wrong — not from ignorance or carelessness, or callous familiarity with evil — she is conscious of her faults while she is committing them, conscious of her defects while she is yielding to them, she repents when all is over, — but she obeys the passion of the moment. Here are two views of her by herself. The first is drawn just after she is engaged to the Duke of Hamilton: —

"I hope the world will make you happy, Beatrix," says Esmond, with a sigh. "You'll be Beatrix till you are my Lady Duchess — will you not? I shall then make your Grace my very lowest bow."

"None of these sighs, and this satire, cousin," she says; "I take his Grace's great bounty thankfully — yes, thankfully; and will wear his honors becomingly. I do not say that he hath touched my heart; but he has my gratitude, obedience, admiration. I have told him that, and no more; and with that his noble heart is content. I am twenty-five years old." "Twenty-six, my dear, says Esmond. "Twenty-five, sir. I choose to be twenty-five; and in eight years, no man hath ever touched my heart. Yes, you did once for a little, Harry, when you came back after Lille, and engaging with that murderer, Mohun, and saving Frank's life — I thought I could like you; and mamma begged me hard, on her knees, and I did — for a day. But the old chill came over me, Harry, and the old fear of you and your melancholy; and I was glad when you went away, and engaged with my Lord Ashburnham, that I might hear no more of you, that's the truth. You are too good for me, somehow. I could not make you happy, and should break my heart in trying and not being able to love you. But if you had asked me when we gave you the sword, you might have had me, Sir, and we both should have been miserable by this time." (Vol. iii. pp. 112, 113.)

The second occurs soon after that engagement has terminated by the Duke's violent death. She is taking leave of Esmond as he sets out on his perilous expedition to bring the Pretender to London:—

"Stay, Harry," continued she, with a tone that had more despondency in it than she was accustomed to show. "Hear a last word; I do love you. I do admire you — who would not, that has known such love as yours has been for us all? But I think I have no heart. At least I have never seen the man that could touch it; and had I found him, I would have followed him in rags had he been a private soldier, or to sea, like one of those buccaneers you used to read to us about when we were children. I would do anything for such a man, bear anything for him; but I never found one. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart; even my Lord Duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him. I knew that three months after our engagement — and was too vain to break it. O Harry! I cried once or twice, not for him, but with tears of rage because I could not be sorry for him. I was frightened to find I was glad of his death; and were I joined to you, I should have the same sense of servitude, the same longing to escape. We should both be unhappy, and you the most, who are as jealous as the Duke was himself. I tried to love him; I tried, indeed I did: affected gladness when he came; submitted to hear when he was by me; and tried the wife's part I thought I was to play for the rest of my days.

But half an hour of that complaisance wearied me, and what would a lifetime be? My thoughts were away when he was speaking; and I was thinking, O that this man would drop my hand, and rise up from before my feet. I knew his great and noble qualities, greater and nobler than mine a thousand times, as yours are, cousin, — I tell you a million and a million times better. But 'twas not for these I took him, — I took him to have a great place in the world, and I lost it, — I lost it, and do not deplore him, — and I often thought as I listened to his fond vows and ardent words, O, if I yield to this man and meet the other, I shall hate him and leave him. I am not good, Harry: my mother is gentle and good, like an angel; I wonder how she should have had such a child. She is weak, but she would die rather than do a wrong; I am stronger than she, but I would do it out of defiance. I do not care for what the parsons tell me with their droning sermons: I used to see them at court, as mean and as worthless as the meanest woman there. O I am sick and weary of the world. I wait but for one thing, and when 'tis done I will take Frank's religion and your poor mother's, and go into a nunnery and end like her."

Here is a grand scene, in which Lady Castlewood, her son, and Esmond force her into the country to escape the solicitations of the Prince. Lady Castlewood proposes to accompany her:—

"For shame!" burst out Beatrix, in a passion of tears and mortification. "You disgrace me by your cruel precautions; my own mother is the first to suspect me, and would take me away as my gaoler. I will not go with you, mother; I will go as no one's prisoner. If I wanted to deceive, do you think I could find no means of evading you? My family suspects me. As those mistrust me that ought to love me most, let me leave them; I will go, but I will go alone: to Castlewood, be it. I have been unhappy there and lonely enough; I let me go back; but spare me at least the humiliation of setting a watch over my misery, which is a trial I can't bear. Let me go when you will, but alone, or not at all. You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness, and I will bear it as I have borne it before. Let my gaoler-in-chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long, I'll thank you, and remember you; and you, brother, and you, mother, how shall I show my gratitude to you for your careful defence of my honor?"

She swept out of the room with the air of an empress, flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field, but scared and almost ashamed of our victory. It did indeed seem hard and cruel that we three should have conspired the banishment and humiliation of that fair creature. We looked at each other in silence; 'twas not the first stroke by many of our actions in that unlucky time, which being done, we wished undone. We agreed it was best she should go alone, speaking stealthily to

one another, and under our breaths, like persons engaged in an act they felt ashamed in doing. (Vol. iii. pp. 260, 261.)

We are always ordered to admire the beauty of a heroine; but if we obey, it is usually an act of faith. The description is so vague, that we are forced to take her charms on trust. But Mr. Thackeray's portrait of Beatrix is so animated and so individualized, that it affects the imagination as if it were painted in colors instead of words:—

She was a brown beauty; that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes, were dark: her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine; except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full, and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest love song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity; whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect grace,—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen,—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic, there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon. (Vol. ii. pp. 115, 116.)

Beatrix is the only character in *Esmond* that interests; but there are many that amuse. All of them, indeed, amuse; for, except when he is playing with a doll which he wants to dress up as a good heroine, Mr. Thackeray can produce nothing that is not amusing.

One of the best is Father Holt. Mr. Thackeray has wisely abandoned the demure face, and stealthy walk, and soft hypocrisy of the conventional Jesuit. His Jesuit is a bold, gay man of the world, frank in his exterior, intrepid in danger, kind and affectionate to those whom it is not his interest to injure, unscrupulous when an instrument is to be obtained or an obstacle is to be removed, and keeping in a separate compartment of his mind, undisturbed by the politics with which the rest is filled, his classical tastes and his theological speculations. Such, we have no doubt, the men of action in the order, the men whose intrigues aimed at establishing or subverting thrones, always must have been, and always will be.

James the Third has sat to two great painters. Walter Scott took him in middle age, and painted him with a grave and melancholy expression; serious, dignified and imposing. Mr. Thackeray gives him to us in his youth, before he had been saddened by disappointment, and improved by experience. His levity, his sen-

sualism, his obstinacy, his ingratitude, his habitual sacrifice of the future to the present, of business to pleasure, and of every person and of every purpose to his own immediate gratification, are features boldly conceived and vigorously executed: and Mr. Thackeray has skilfully thrown over the whole a varnish of courtesy and graciousness, which softens and renders almost pleasing the despicable and odious character that lies beneath it. Sir Walter was as much of a Jacobite as it was possible to be in the nineteenth century. Mr. Thackeray's politics are not obtruded. What peeps out of them appears to us to be Whig. James the Third has fared in their hands accordingly.

We cannot quit *Esmond* without remarking the excellence of the still-life vignettes with which it is adorned. Castlewood House is described over and over, and always with fresh beauty. With great skill it is generally made to form the back-ground of some memorable incident, and imprinted with that incident on the conception of the relator. It is thus introduced with wonderful effect, just after the parting of Mohun and Castlewood, in apparent amity, but with a fatal quarrel in the heart of each.

Lord Castlewood stood at the door watching his guest and his people as they went out under the arch of the outer gate. When he was there, Lord Mohun turned once more; my Lord Viscount slowly raised his beaver and bowed. His face wore a peculiar livid look, Harry thought. He cursed and kicked away his dogs, which came jumping about him—then he walked up to the fountain in the centre of the court, and leaned against a pillar and looked into the basin. As *Esmond* crossed over to his own room, late the chaplain's, on the other side of the court, and turned to enter in at the low door, he saw Lady Castlewood looking through the curtains of the great window of the drawing room over head at my lord as he stood regarding the fountain. There was in the court a peculiar silence: and the scene remained long in *Esmond's* memory:—the sky bright over head: the buttresses of the building and the sun-dial casting a shadow over the gilt *memento mori* inscribed underneath: the two dogs, a black greyhound and a spaniel nearly white, the one with his face up to the sun, and the other snuffing amongst the grass and stones, and my lord leaning over the fountain, which was plashing audibly. 'Tis strange how that scene and the sound of that fountain remains fixed on the memory of a man who has beheld a hundred sights of splendor, and danger too, of which he has kept no account. (Vol. i. pp. 313, 314, 315.)

We will extract another of equal vividness. *Esmond* is revisiting Castlewood.

He had not seen its ancient grey towers and well-remembered woods for nearly fourteen years,

and since he rode thence with my lord to whom his mistress with her young children by her side waved an adieu. There was the fountain in the court babbling its familiar music, the old hall and its furniture, the carved chair my late lord used, the very flagon he drank from. Esmond's mistress knew he would like to sleep in the little room he used to occupy; 'twas made ready for him, and wall-flowers and sweet herbs set in the adjoining chamber, the chaplain's room.

Esmond rose up before the dawn, passed into the next room, where the air was heavy with the odor of the wall-flowers, and tried the spring, and whether the window worked still. The spring had not been touched for years, but yielded at length, and the whole fabric of the window sank down. Esmond closed the casement up again, as the dawn was rising over Castlewood village; he could hear the clinking at the blacksmith's forge yonder among the trees, across the green, and past the river, on which a mist still lay sleeping. (Vol. iii. pp. 171 — 174.)

When an author has been long and repeatedly before the public, the verdict of that great tribunal is likely to be a fair one. We believe its judgment on Mr. Thackeray — a judgment which we are not inclined to question — to be this: —

That he is a bad constructor of a story; that his openings are tedious and involved, his conclusions abrupt and unsatisfactory; and that the intervening space is filled by incidents with little mutual dependance, and sometimes, as in *Pendennis*, repetitions of one another. On the other hand, it is admitted that these incidents, taken separately, are often admirable, well imagined, and well told, and amusing exhibitions of the weaknesses or the vices of those who take part in them.

We say "weaknesses or vices," because this is the second reproach addressed to Mr. Thackeray. It is said that his men, if they are not absurd, are tyrants or rogues; that his women if they are not fools, are intriguers or flirts. This accusation, if it be an accusation, is true as respects his men, and nearly true as respects his women.

If the *dramatis personæ* of *Vanity Fair* were average samples of the two millions who form the nation that inhabits London, or even if they were samples of what an American would call the Upper Ten Thousand of the Londoners, the London world would be a detestable one. It would be as black morally as it is physically.

Now we are ready to admit that the darkness of Mr. Thackeray's patterns is an artistic defect: that is to say, we think that their texture and general effect would be improved by the introduction of a few threads, not as milk-white and as superfine as Sir Charles Grandison or Clarissa, but of good average quality and color: such as Belford, or Colonel Morden, or Miss Howe, or Lady G. But if the objection

be not to the artistic effect but to the truth of Mr. Thackeray's characters, if he be accused of giving not merely an unpleasant but a false view of human nature, the answer is this: that in *Esmond* the scene is laid in what we have already described as the period in which the English character was most demoralized: and that in *Vanity Fair*, the Characters are taken almost exclusively from two classes — the pursuers of nothing but wealth, and the pursuers of nothing but pleasure. Mr. Thackeray paints the former as vain, greedy, purse-proud, oppressive, and overbearing in prosperity, and grovelling and base in adversity, and envious and suspicious at all times. He describes the latter as frivolous, heartless, and false, with as much selfishness and vanity and malignity, as their Russell-Square neighbors, though concealed under a smoother exterior. And who can say that these pictures are false?

The persons who form the *élite* of London society, the men whose objects are great and whose pursuits are ennobling, the politicians and men of science, the lawyers and physicians, the men of literature and taste, the poets and artists — all these are as much ignored as if the writer were not aware of their existence. The only allusion to such a class is old Osborne's complaint, that his daughter, Mrs. Frederick Bullock, "invites him to meet damned literary men, and keeps the earls and honorables to herself." *Vanity Fair* is not a fair sample of the London world taken as a whole, but is a not very exaggerated picture of two portions of it.

We have less to say in defence of *Pendennis*, for there the field is wider, and yet the result is nearly the same. Even in *Pendennis*, however, though the hero and his friend Warrington are literary men, their literature is of an humble kind. It is not the literature of statesmen, historians, or philosophers, of those who write for the purpose of influencing or instructing, or improving mankind; it is not the literature of those whose object, though more selfish, is still magnanimous and splendid, of those who aim at widely diffused and permanent fame; — it is the literature of those who write for bread, who use their pens as a laborer does his spade, or a weaver his shuttle. Unless there be some reason for believing that hack writers in general are better than those whom Mr. Thackeray has described, we have no right to quarrel with his descriptions. There are too, in *Pendennis*, one or two persons whom we neither laugh at nor hate. There is Laura, who is intelligent and amiable, though indeed she behaves shamefully to the poor girl from the porter's lodge. There is a Mr. Pynsent, in whom there is no harm. There is a Lady Rockminster, who is sensible and kind, though rather *brusque*. In fact, however, we must admit that *Pendennis* is



open to the reproach that it professes to be a fair specimen of English morality, and is not so.

Lastly, Mr. Thackeray is accused of lavishing on his heroines undeserved praise. It is said, that having with great skill put together a creature of which the principal elements are indiscriminating affection, ill-requited devotion, ignorant partiality, a weak will and a narrow intellect, he calls on us to worship his poor idol as the type of female excellence. This is true. Mr. Thackeray does all this; it is one of the greatest blemishes in his books. Happily it is a blemish that can be removed with ease. Nothing more than a pair of scissors is necessary. Let him carefully cut out every puff which he has wasted on Amelia, and Helen, and Laura, and Rachel; let him leave them as all the characters in a novel ought to be left, to the reader's unbiassed judgment, and they would take their proper rank among his *dramatis personæ*, though it may differ from that to which their inventor thinks them entitled.

So much for Mr. Thackeray's faults. As to his merits, it is admitted that he is unrivalled by any living writer as an inventor and a describer of character; that he has penetrated into the lowest cells of pride, vanity, and selfishness, and laid open some of the secrets of the human prison-house which never were revealed before. Every reader admires the ease and vigor of his dialogue, its sparkling wit and its humor, sometimes broad, sometimes delicate, but always effective.

The few extracts which we have made from the serious portions of his works are sufficient to show that he has great tragic powers. Nothing can be more exquisitely imagined or described than the parting of George Osborne and Amelia. His natural tendency, however, is towards comedy, or rather towards satire. He

"Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools."

But his favorite amusement is the unmasking hypocrisy. He delights to show the selfishness of kindness, the pride of humility, the consciousness of simplicity. If any of Mr. Thackeray's characters had been copied from real life, and the originals could recognize themselves in his imitations, they never would tremble more than when some apparently good act was ascribed to them. They would expect to see in the next page the virtue turn into a vice or a weakness.

Mr. Thackeray, in his English Humorists, resembles little Mr. Thackeray as a satirist. He is as indulgent to his real as he is severe towards his imaginary characters. He treats, indeed, Congreve with superciliousness, and Sterne with contempt almost amounting to

disgust, and trembles before the awful phantom of Swift, but embraces all the other spirits that he calls up—Addison, Steel, Prior, Gay, Pope, Hogarth, Smollett, Fielding, and Goldsmith—with the cordiality of a brother in the craft.

When we read the names which Mr. Thackeray has strung together in his list of humorists, we felt some doubt as to his principle of classification, as to the common quality which grouped together writers so different as Pope and Sterne. In his first lecture Mr. Thackeray professes to point out this common quality:—

The humorous writer, he says, besides appealing to your sense of ridicule, professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness—your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture,—your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak.

Now, it is difficult to say what moral writer does not come within so capacious a definition as this. At the head of the humorists of the eighteenth century we should have to put Johnson, Horace Walpole, and Cowper; for never were men who commented more diligently on all the ordinary actions and passions of life, and their comments were deeply tinged with the wisdom resembling absurdity, and the absurdity resembling wisdom, to which we give the name of Humor.

We will not, however, carp any more at Mr. Thackeray's nomenclature. He has given us a set of amusing lectures on interesting persons, and we need not inquire further into his reasons for selecting them. Little new was to be said about Swift after Johnson and Scott, or about Addison after Johnson and Macaulay; but we were glad to see a whole lecture given to Steele, to whose biography less attention has been paid than his amusing chequered character and the great share which he occupies in our earlier English literature deserve.

There occurs, however, in this lecture a passage which leads us to suspect that Mr. Thackeray had not studied with the attention that his great office requires, all the works of the authors whom he is criticising. He treats the dinner, in the Polite Conversation, as a specimen of the habits of the times. "Fancy," he says, "the moral condition of that society in which a lady of fashion provided a shoulder of veal, a surloin, a goose, hare, rabbit, chickens, partridges, black puddings, and a ham for a dinner for eight Christians. What—what could have been the condition of that polite world in which people openly ate goose after

almond pudding, and took their soup in the middle of dinner?" (p. 155.) Now, the great Simon Wagstaff, in the preface to his immortal work, has answered all this by anticipation.

"Some," he says, "will perhaps object that when I bring my company to dinner I mention too great a variety of dishes, not consistent with the art of cookery, or proper for the season of the year; and *part of the first course is mingled with the second*; besides a failure in politeness by introducing a black pudding to a lord's table, and at a great entertainment: But if I had omitted the black pudding, what would have become of that exquisite reason given by Miss Notable for not eating it? The world perhaps might have lost it for ever, and I should have been justly answerable. I cannot but hope that such hypercritical readers will please to consider that my business was to make so full and complete a body of refined sayings as compact as I could: only taking care to produce them in the most natural and probable manner, in order to allure my readers into the very substance and marrow of this most admirable and necessary art.

It is remarkable that, in his notice of Pope, Mr. Thackeray omits the works in which Pope was strictly a humorist, and notices only those in which he was strictly a poet. Now, we sympathize with his admiration of the satire on Addison, and of the conclusion of the *Dunciad*, though we should hesitate before we admitted that in the latter "Pope shows himself the equal of all poets of all times." But if we had had to point out the work in which the peculiar powers of Pope, and especially his powers as a humorist, shine the brightest, we should have selected not the *Satires* or the *Dunciad*, but the *Rape of the Lock*.

The best of the lectures is, we think, that on Fielding; and we are delighted to read Mr. Thackeray's bold and cordial and discriminating praise of this great, but we fear, somewhat neglected artist; a moralist, from whom the generation that is now passing away imbibed a heartier contempt for meanness and duplicity, and a heartier sympathy with courage, frankness, and manliness, than we fear are to be acquired from the more decorous narratives which form the mental food of their successors.

From Chambers's Journal.

#### LINES ON THE LOST.

STRAIN, strain the eager eye,  
To Ocean's western verge, which bounds the sight  
From seas, far spread, where day with silent night  
Rejoins eternity.

In vain; no sail appears,  
Bearing on gladsome wing the long-lost brave  
To love's fond gaze; 'tis but some restless wave  
Which there its white crest rears.

While in the long left home,  
The mother, wife, and children anxious wait,  
Oft smooth the fireside chair, oft stir the grate,  
As he at last were come.

No! Winter marked that crew  
Of Britons bold brave his relentless reign,  
And from his throne he summoned all his train:  
Each forth his weapon drew.

Prepared, he bade them stand,  
Unbar the gates of Night, and to the hall  
Where cold eternal kills, leads one and all  
That doomed yet dauntless band.

Doomed, but without decay,  
They pass through Death, yet never reach the tomb.

Imperishably fixed, they wait the doom  
Of their still lifelike clay.

The seasons come and go;  
Like Egypt's kings embalmed, they're resting there,  
Each in his ice-hewn sepulchre,  
And pyramid of snow.

Yet Ocean tells their knell,  
From shore to shore the solemn peal ascends,  
And with its voice of many waters blends  
Their dirge funereal.

And the winds wait for them,  
For many a breeze which loves the seaman brave,  
By shelly beach, or in its choir-like cave,  
Now sings their requiem.

The secret of their fate  
Shall, when the sea gives up its dead, be shown,  
And God for judgment by his great White Throne  
The world shall congregate.

W. S. M.

THE MANSE. PENICUIK.

Lartet, an aéronaut, sent up a young girl in his Montgolfier balloon; it fell at Montesquieu, and the girl was killed. Lartet was tried at Mont-de-Marsan for causing her death by want of proper precaution. The Court acquitted him of all imprudence, but found that he had broken his engagement in sending the girl into the air by herself; and therefore sentenced him to be imprisoned for three months, to pay a fine of fifty francs, and five hundred francs damages to the girl's relatives.

From Chambers's Journal.

# REVELATIONS ABOUT SACKS.

EVER since the drinking-cup of Joseph was found in the sack of Benjamin, and we don't know how long before, sacks have maintained a distinguished position among the commercial nations of the earth, as the receptacles of the food of man, and of a multitude of other things besides, which we are fortunately not under the necessity of enumerating. There can be but little doubt that a sack was the first portable depository for property constructed by human ingenuity, and that it was formed from the skin of an animal. Such were the bottles of ancient peoples, before the potter's or the glass-maker's art was known, or was extensively practised, or popularly adapted to meet the common want; and such, at the present day, are the vessels of many nomadic and pastoral tribes partially, if at all, acquainted with the ceramic or textile processes. But the cattle on a thousand hills, if every one of them surrendered his skin for the purpose, would not supply a thousandth part of the sacks which modern commerce demands for the reception of its merchandise. The millions stowed away in granaries and warehouses—the millions more constantly traversing the ocean in every direction—and, more than all, the millions in daily use wherever men are congregated—all these defy calculation to number, or the imagination to conceive. A sack is truly a comprehensive subject, and although it can be examined only on two sides—the outside and the inside—it may be considered from many and various points of view; but in order to keep ourselves within bounds, we shall confine our remarks, upon the present occasion, to the sacks which undergo a London experience.

The bulk of the sacks used in this country are woven by power-loom in Dundee, and by hand-loom in Norwich and various other places throughout the kingdom. The material is either hemp, which forms the best and most durable, or *jute*, a fibrous plant imported from the East Indies. The woven sacking, though partly made up in the provinces, is brought in great quantities to London, and being cut up into lengths, is sewn into sacks by women, who, working for very moderate wages upon a rough and cumbersome material, do not cut a very imposing figure among the fair professors of needle-craft. There is a large sack-manufactory in Tooley Street, and the sack-making women may be seen at early morn and at eventide laden with piles of sacks, made or unmade, upon their heads, proceeding over London Bridge to and from the factory. These hard-working females have latterly found a formidable rival in the new sewing-machine, which makes a sack in a fraction more than no time, and threatens ultimately to throw them out of employment. Fortunately for them, however, there is an incessant demand for sacks—a demand which is always increasing in something like an arithmetical ratio. A question here naturally arises: What becomes of all the sacks? the answer to which, if it could be definitely given, would involve, we are afraid, an amount of moral delinquency which, if it could be meas-

ured by the sackful, would astound the questioner. Perhaps we shall arrive at some idea of the response by the time we have got to the end of our paper.

It might be reasonably supposed, that the immense demand for sacks would have the effect increased consumption has on other species of manufacture—the effect, namely, of improving their quality. But the fact happens to be just the reverse; the truth being, that the actual desideratum at the present time is, not a strong sack—not a tough, serviceable sack—not by any means a good sack, or any such kind of thing—but—hear it, ye men of inventive genius!—*a sack not worth the stealing!* Here is a field for enterprise! If any cunning contriver or persevering experimentalist can produce a sack which will barely carry its load once, and defy replenishing when empty, and sell it at a corresponding price—a price, that is, proportionate to the value of its temporary service—we will guarantee him a fortune. A good sack will cost 2s., or thereabouts, and will last for eight or ten years, and might be filled, perhaps, forty or fifty times or more; but the same 2s. spent in sacks at 4d. apiece, if such could be got, to be filled but once, would be beyond comparison a better investment on the part of the miller. We calculate by moral arithmetic.

Mention the word “sack” to a metropolitan miller or corn-dealer, and down go the corners of his mouth instinctively. It is an ominous word, suggestive of a drawback upon his profits to an alarming but an indefinite amount, the sum-total of which he has no accurate notion of, and cannot have until the ceremony of stock-taking reveals the awful deficit. For we know not how long, but at least for some generations past, a property in sacks in use has been the most equivocal kind of property a man can possess. From the custom of the trade in corn, flour, grain, pulse, and agricultural productions of all kinds, the sacks in which they are contained are not chargeable to the purchaser, but are returnable to the owner when empty. Unhappily, they are liable to the other contingency, and a prodigious percentage of them never find their way back to the proprietors at all. It is marvellous to what a variety of uses such an apparently unmanageable material as a stray sack may, by a stretch of ingenuity, be applied. It becomes not merely a bed-sacking, a door-mat, fuel for the oven, roofing for the loft, but a pathway for the garden, wainscoting for the summer-house, raw material for the paper-mill, or daubed with pitch or tar; it finds its way from the warehouse of the corn-factor to the wagon of the coal-merchant, or from the shop of the baker to the hold of some outward-bound vessel, to be expatriated for ever. So outrageous is the tendency of sacks to a mysterious and unaccountable disappearance, which some owners term “evaporation,” that we have known a single miller, doing no extraordinary trade, to lose, in the space of three years and a half, 16,500 sacks—a loss of nearly 5000 in a year, amounting to little less than a third of his entire issue. Between twenty and thirty years ago, the depredations upon this unprotected property had risen to such a pitch,

that a few of the millers and factors who had suffered most severely resolved to submit to it no longer. They met together, and organized an association for the purpose of inflicting the penalty of the law upon transgressors. Writs were issued and warrants enforced against some of the petty plunderers, and not a few of them were brought to the slow and unwilling conviction, that to steal a sack was a theft, at least in the eye of the law; but they suffered the penalty with the air of martyrs enduring persecution, and were far from acknowledging its justice. But when a prosecution was threatened, and indeed commenced, against a wholesale purloiner, who was caught in the act of shipping a whole cargo of wheat in sacks belonging to his neighbors, proceedings were stopped by one of the most influential men in the association, who, doing a large business with the delinquent, preferred compromising the crime to disobliging a customer. As a consequence, that association fell to pieces.

Let us glance for a moment at the experience of a sack in London. When a baker or corn-chandler buys flour or grain from a factor in Mark Lane, he receives an order upon the wharfinger for a specified number of sacks of flour or grain, as it may be. These, in the course of a few hours, are delivered at his place of business operations. He does not pay for the sacks, but they are returnable when empty—a consummation which may occur to-morrow, or six or twelve months hence. He is not, however, called upon to return them himself. There are in London at the present time—and have been for these fifty years past—sack-collectors, men, or firms, whose sole occupation is the collection of sacks and the delivering of them to their owners, or the agents of their owners. Some of these collectors keep a number of light carts continually driving about the town and suburbs on this errand. The collector charges 2s. 6d. a dozen, or 24d. each, for every sack he rescues from the hands of the customer. In order to stimulate the baker or chandler to produce them as soon as empty, he is obliged to divide this premium with him, awarding him 1d., and sometimes 1½d. per sack for all he is able and disposed to surrender. It is the collector's business to sort them, to pack them in bundles, and forward them to the proprietors, before he presents his account for payment. At the period above alluded to, it is supposed that the collectors, or their agents, were principally concerned in the plunder carried on; although it was sufficiently shown by the prosecutions of the day, that they did not want for countenance among dishonest tradesmen and dealers, rogues in grain, who profited by their complicity. Some years after the demise of the first association, the necessities of the commerce in grain called into existence another, which, under the designation of "Sack-protection Society," yet exists, and holds its periodical meetings at Jack's Coffee-house, Mark Lane. It is a sort of guardian guild, enforcing the rigor of the law against sack-thieves. The members pay an annual subscription, we believe of two guineas each, to defray the cost of its proceedings, and have thereby reduced by a considerable percentage the loss by

sack-plunder. They maintain a policeman in plain clothes, who, all-observant but unobserved, surveys the operations of suspected persons: he has, from long practice, a keen eye for a sack, can single out a corn or flour sack pressed into the service of the coal-merchant, or doing duty in a potato-shop; and it is his function to report all such malversations, in order to speedy punishment and redress. By such and similar energetic measures, the Sack-protection Society secures some show of respect for sacks, and thereby, to a limited extent, benefits others as well as its own members. Still, however, the loss of sacks is enormous, and altogether unaccountable: we have heard it estimated variously at from seven to five-and-twenty per cent.; and it is characteristic, that the loss varies with the value of the article—the old and worthless returning to the proprietors, while the new and strong continue their travels. On this account, no miller, whose sacks go into the London market, dreams of paying a first-rate price for the article. At home, he will use sacks costing 2s. each, and will keep them for long years in use under his own eye; while those he sends out into the world may cost him less than half that sum, as he has but an uncertain prospect of seeing them again. Hence the desideratum we have hinted at above, of a species of sack which should cost a sum of money not more in amount than the present charge for collecting, plus the average loss by plunder, and which being thrown in gratis to the purchaser of its contents, would release both miller and factor from all anxiety respecting its ultimate fate.

The sack has other enemies in London besides the contraband dealers. Wharf-laborers and wagoners declare war against them, and invariably attack them with sharp iron hooks, with which they can lay hold of them more readily than with the fingers. The result is the rending of thousands of them, and the partial waste of their contents—a waste which, if it prevailed to a hundred times its present mischievous extent, would never prevent the use of the hook by the London wagoner, who would stand up for the privilege of his calling.

There is a prevailing and universal prejudice in favor of sacks among bakers and corn-chandlers. Barrels are to them an abomination—the reason being, that these cannot, like sacks, be folded up, and thrown aside when empty. Barrels take up as much room empty as full; and London tradesmen being proverbially short of room would soon find themselves built out of their own premises by an accumulation of empty barrels. Large quantities of American flour are constantly imported in barrels, but the bakers, for the most part, will have nothing to do with it until it has been shot into sacks. This ceremony is continually going on at the wharfs on the banks the Thames, and furnishes daily employment to a particular class of men. There is another objection to barrels; from lack of the occasional movement and shaking which it undergoes in sacks, the flour settles down in them, and, if untouched for a long period, has to be dug out in lumps, and pulverized again by rotating in a close wire cylinder set in rapid motion. Again, a third ob-

jection to their use is found in the negligence of the Americans, who, in their eagerness to do a fast trade, will, upon emergency, make them of green wood, in consequence of which the flour becomes impregnated with a disagreeable flavor. They are, in general, however, made remarkably well, with interiors astonishingly clean and neatly finished; but they are a drug to the English factor, who is often too glad to get rid of them at six or eight shillings a dozen.

The above revelations on the subject of sacks do not afford a very agreeable view of the practical morality of trade. But this is only one example, though an example on a large scale, of the imprudence of reposing confidence in a class, among whom it is impossible to distinguish the rogues from the honest men. There was a time when purchasers bought the sacks when they bought the flour or grain, and were credited with their value when they returned them empty. A return to that straightforward practice appears to be the only remedy for an evil which has resulted from its abandonment. It will deprive the rogues of the opportunity which has made so many of them what they are; it will put an end to the perplexities of the owners of the sacks; and, in abolishing the troublesome machinery contrived with a view to protect them, will remove from the honest members of the trade the odium of living under surveillance as the suspected custodians of other men's goods.

**A GHOUL IN VALPARAISO.**—We learn by the Valparaiso Herald that an extraordinary excitement prevails in that place, in consequence of a report having arisen that an Individual—no one knows of which sex—is in the habit of devouring any number of children he or she can get hold of. The juvenile population is of course in as great terror as the papas and mammas; and one day a boy on being asked by a Frenchman for a light to his cigar took to his heels in such trepidation, that he stumbled, and rubbed the skin off the point of his nose. This was seen at a glance to be "the first bite of the ghoul;" and the exasperated populace made a rush at the monster, and would have torn him to pieces if he had not been rescued by the police. These "put him in a carriage, and whirled him off toward the station-house; the crowd gave chase, and for two miles or so ran hooting and yelling after the carriage: everywhere the alarm spread, and the mob increased; they poured through the streets like a torrent, and ladies, as they swept by, crossed themselves and exclaimed: "A revolution!" But the unfortunate prisoner was safely landed at the station-house, and the mob by thousands pressed round, eager and furious: then the story ran: "This is the man who eats our children! he has been at it two years and a half—he has eaten up one hundred and ten infants!" "Two hundred!" says another. "Two hundred and fifty!" says a third. "He eats them raw!" "He broils them on a gridiron!" "He makes them into sausages and sells them!" The end of the adventure was, that as the mob seemed determined not to raise the siege of the station-house, the Frenchman was dressed in some

disguise, let out by a private door, and so escaped for the time. But the most curious part of the story is to come: it is an ascertained fact, that *not one child in Valparaiso is missing!*

**COMMUNICATION FROM BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.**—Among the good things said and read at the editorial dinner in Springfield, as recorded in the Springfield Republican, was the following:—

At the dinner table was read by Dr. Holland the following letter from Benjamin Franklin, who was among those necessarily absent:

*Telegraph Office, the SEVENTH SPHERE*  
Eighteen hundred and fifty-fourth year,  
(For we have rhyme in our very dates up here.)  
Of the first month the 17th day,  
(The anniversary, by the way,  
Of your humble servant's birth, in clay.)

Gentlemen, Editors:—

Free for a day from your cares and your creditors,  
Free from the scissors, the pen, and the hypo,  
Permit ye a brother—an old-time typo,—

On this bright anniversary,  
In a style rather cursory,  
(And in *curs-ery vers-ery*.)

To write you a line from the spirit-land nursery.

You are all asleep to the signs of the times;  
Dead as a hammer—dead as old Grimes.

Seated around this table to-day,  
Catch ye not gleams of a milder sway?

Something millennial?

Something perennial?

Something of promise upspringing within you all?  
There sits a neighbor you charged with sheep-stealing,

(Or something as bad) but, in cordial feeling,  
Without any "ardent" your ardor to mellow,  
You are blessing him now for a capital fellow.  
And there at your elbow or sitting before ye,  
Is a man (if we credit your brotherly story,) Who the shabbiest, meanest, political knave is;  
Who to Falsehood and Party the pitiful slave is;  
And you've helped him, for hours, to your graces and graves.

The man who indited those slashing leaders,  
Whose paragraphs ever were discord-breeders,  
And the poor little chaps  
Who received the raps  
Sit side by side—good friends and good feeders.

Seated around this table to-day,  
Catch ye not gleams of a milder sway,

Something millennial,

Something perennial,

Something of promise upspringing within you all?

Thanks, my kind friends, for the honor you do me,  
In coming together this day of my birth;

Thanks for all compliments paid unto me;

And my poor labors achieved on earth!

But worship me never, nor follow my track;

Leave my name to myself and my books on your shelves;

My genius you have not—your genius I lack;

So be better than FRANKLIN—be nobly YOURSELVES!

In the *Ultima Thule*.

Yours, very truly,

Benjamin  
Franklin.



From Household Words.

## OFF! OFF!

I WAS reflecting the other day with a good deal of satisfaction upon the improved spirit of modern criticism. Certainly, the reading public has reason to be rejoiced that good sense, good taste and right feeling have pretty nearly discountenanced that pungency of ridicule and bitterness of invective with which critics were wont to assail authors, and that fierceness of retort and defiant *tu quoqueism* wherewith the book writer retaliated upon the reviewer. It appears by this time to be generally understood that such exhibitions were most unseemly and disgraceful to the actors engaged in them, and that their tendency in all cases has been to degrade literature. The wit and dexterity of Pope can reconcile few of us now-a-days to the gross personalities and filthy machinery of *The Dunciad*, several of the heroes of which might have found a sufficing vengeance upon the poet in a court of law; and one needs not to be very old to remember critical articles in magazines of great reputation, written by men of very vigorous minds and with uncommon powers of humor, in which the antecedents of an author, his person, and sometimes (following Pope) even his poverty, have been brought to bear against him by way of accessaries to public scorn and contempt. None of us can doubt, now, that literature was herein degraded, and that the responsibility which is upon all men—but especially upon men with those dangerous weapons, pen and ink in their hands—to be temperate and forbearing was most blamefully set at nought. Dull authors will undoubtedly continue to write; and much waste of vivacity will be shown in exposing their sorry pretensions; and sprightly writers will, as heretofore, be taken to task by very self-sufficient and leaden critics: but it is to be hoped that the day is gone by when the publication of a bad poem subjected the bard to a punishment hardly preferable to the pillory; when the alleged vulgarity of one author was denounced in the language of Billingsgate, when his want of feeling and nature was stigmatised with utterly unfeeling and unnatural bitterness.

The crushing, extinguishing, tomahawking system having been well nigh abolished, there is one further reformation, in which the interests of literature are deeply concerned, that I could wish to see achieved. The abuse of which I am about to speak, is one of which, I fancy, a moment's consideration will convince anybody of the expediency of getting rid. It is so barbarous and inhuman that it is not a little surprising it ever obtained in countries boasting a civilization, however imperfect; but it is altogether marvellous that it should have been retained till hoar antiquity can come forward and shake his venerable head against its extinction.

The other evening I was at one of the theatres when a piece was presented which underwent that time-honored process of condemnation, which has an appropriate name for it, likewise sanctioned by time. In plain but theatrical language, it was "damned." Now it must be confessed, the piece in question was indeed a sorry

affair. Professing an intent to be a side-splitter of no ordinary width of aperture, it was conducive rather to a pensive frame of mind, in which the occasionally defective adaptation of means to an end, and other infirmities of human design, might be taken into consideration. The piece deserved to die, and suffered incontinently. But while we applaud the verdict of a jury, we do not witness the execution; still less should we consent to be present in court, were the culprit to undergo his capital punishment then and there. The mode of dealing the fatal blow to this heavy dramatic trifle pained me exceedingly; although in former years, I am grieved to remember, I have witnessed much more violent demonstrations of popular vengeance with comparative indifference, even when I have seen the actors in distress, and the ladies in the boxes pale with terror at the "row," and agitated by sympathy for the author.

And, indeed, the author demands all our sympathy, with whatever delicacy we may intimate to him that his genius does not lie in the direction of the stage, or however tenderly we may refer him back to his desk and recommend him to try his fortune a second time. He has bestowed nights of most anxious thought upon, he has undergone days of labor in, the composition of his work. He will be paid for his labor; but only if he can delight an audience, or, at any rate please them. He hopes to do so. Call not this an author's vanity: for most men, of all professions, are ill judges of what has cost them much time and great pains to accomplish. If a dramatist got his plot by inspiration, and could stamp his characters and evolve his plot instantaneously, he would the better discern his chances of success. Well, then, imagine the play accepted; the actors pleased with their parts; the curtain up; the curtain down. See the pallid poet in that side-box. Be sure the ebbs and flows of his drama, during the performance, have had their copies in the advances and recessions of his heart. And now he casts a hurried and wild glance at the audience,

"Expecting

Their universal shout and high applause  
To fill his ear; when, contrary, he hears  
On all sides, from innumerable tongues,  
A dismal universal hiss, the sign  
Of public scorn."

It is this—this "sign of public scorn,"—which we must at once away with. Let it be a matter of common consent that such degrading marks of public displeasure shall be reserved for exhibitions of gross immorality or licentiousness, to which they are alone applicable, and for the condemnation of which a deaf and uninitiated spectator on the first night of a bad play, would naturally suppose them to be designed.

"If I have unearned luck,  
To escape the serpent's tongue,"

says Shakspeare, "I will do better another time." This he adds in effect, and this was pleaded by Puck to the audience of the *Midsummer Night's*

Dream! And Prospero beseeches the groundlings to be merciful to The Tempest.

When I read that some of Jonson's and Beaumont and Fletcher's plays were condemned on a first hearing, I cannot but acknowledge that I feel a particular concern, especially for the former. While I admit that some of his later plays are deficient in that interest which an audience has, perhaps, a right to expect, still, Old Ben's age, his misery, his poverty, his renown as a scholar and the author of four comedies—in their way incomparable—should have protected him against the "serpent's tongue." The commendatory verses prefixed to his printed plays, from the pens of his brother dramatists, must have afforded a sorry consolation to the outraged poet. It gives me a twinge to read the following:—"Dryden, who was present on the first night of Cowley's *Cutler* of Coleman Street, related to Dennis, the critic, that when they told him how little favor had been shown him, he received the news of his ill success not with so much firmness as might have been expected from so great a man." If being told of the condemnation of his amusing comedy so affected the melancholy Cowley, what would have been his feelings had he seen and heard the operation as it was practised by the fathers of the Mohocks of the next age. As it was he never again tried the stage; neither did Congreve, after the condemnation of his *Way of the World*. There is a story that the author, hearing behind the scenes the hideous marks of disapproval, snatched the copy from the prompter's hand, rushed upon the stage and forbade the actors to proceed, adding that the public was not worthy of such a play. The tale has been doubted, but it is probable. The hard-hearted licentiousness of this comedy was no cause of its ill-reception; and Congreve might well have thought, with Dryden—

"Sure there's a fate in plays, and 'tis in vain  
To write while these malignant planets reign:  
Some very foolish influence rules the pit,  
Not always kind to sense, or just to wit."

The *Way of the World* contains more wit, perhaps, than any comedy in the English language.

If anybody wishes to know how a sensitive man of genius can be touched by hisses, catcalls, and other discordant exponents of summary criticism, let him turn to Mr. Forster's *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, where he will see such a laceration of the poet's feelings, on the disapproval of some scenes in his comedy of the *Good Natured Man*, as will, I am sure, effectually deter him from ever again sibilating, off-off-ing, and roaring down any play whose only fault, however grievous it may be, is dulness.

Charles Lamb, in a letter to a friend, has recorded the fate—and the manner of it—of his farce of Mr. H——. It will be seen that he would fain make light of it, but his pleasantry is somewhat hysterical. "Hang 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes, like bears; mops and mows, like apes; sometimes snakes, that hissed me into

madness. . . . Mercy on us, that God should give his favorite children—men—mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely; to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into the mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyænas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison; to asperse and vilify the innocent labors of their fellow creatures, who are desirous to please them!"

We are informed by Lamb's excellent biographer, Mr. Justice Talfourd, that, seeing the lame and impotent conclusion of his farce, the author was himself disgusted, and hissed in the concert with the audience. That he hissed is undoubted; but that the defect of the *dénouement* of Mr. H—— incited him to do so, I cannot believe. He felt—the house had so decided—that he was a dramatic culprit. He was

"A guilty creature sitting at a play"

—at a play of his own too; and an exquisite consciousness of his miserable identity awoke a fearful suspicion that the audience would detect him. Accordingly, like many a true culprit in the world's ways and highways, he joined the cry of "Stop thief!"—set off on an imaginary chase—in other words hissed himself with all his might.

"De Camp was hooted more than hissed—hooted and bellowed off the stage, before the second act was finished, so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted."

This, with other particulars, is related by Charles Lamb as having taken place on the first night of his friend Holcroft's *Vindictive Man*. The Good-natured Man, some forty years before, had been treated in pretty much the same manner. But let me find room for a graphic description from the pen of Lord Byron. It chronicles the disastrous doom of *Ina*, a tragedy:—

"Mrs. Wilmot's tragedy was last night damned. They may bring it on again, and probably will; but damned it was—not a word of the last act audible. I went and witnessed the whole process. The first three acts with transient gushes of applause oozed patiently but heavily on. I must say it was badly acted, particularly by Kean, who was groaned upon in the third act. Well, the fourth act became as muddy and turbid as need be. But the fifth! the fifth stuck fast at the king's prayer. He was no sooner upon his knees than the audience got upon their legs—the villainous pit—and roared, and hissed, and whistled. Well, that was choked a little; but the ruffian scene, the penitent peasantry, and killing the bishop and princess—oh, it was all over! The curtain fell upon unheard actors, and the announcement attempted by Kean for Monday was equally ineffectual. Mrs. Bartley was so frightened, that though the people were tolerably quiet, the epilogue was quite inaudible to half the house."

We have quoted the above description that full weight may be given to the comment by the

writer on the scene which he had been so recently witnessing. He says, "It is, however, a good warning not to risk or write tragedies. I never had much bent that way; but if I had this would have cured me."

Herein we see plainly enough the evil consequences to dramatic literature that arise from this mode of manifesting diapproval of a play. "But Byron had no dramatic genius; he himself confesses he had no bent that way." I am by no means sure that he had no such genius; but whether or not, that is little to the purpose. "If I had, this would have cured me." There is the point. Others have been as sensitive to criticism as Byron; indeed, young Keats and others have proved themselves much more so; but what was Byron's mental plight when he heard that Elliston was about to bring upon the stage his *Marino Faliero*? It is possible that the torture he describes himself as suffering, in his letters to Mr. Murray may be exaggerated; and that, after all, there might be within him some lurking "fearful joy" that his tragedy might be produced and be successful, I can believe; but that he had a most acute and painful remembrance of poor Mrs. Wilmot's Ina, I am quite certain. I say, then, that the system of damning plays has often dismayed poets—and, perhaps, great ones—from attempting to write for the stage, or, having made an attempt and failed, from renewing it.

Not to speak farther of the feelings of authors in this matter, where, let us ask, is the necessity, what is the use of hissing and hooting a new play? The time has been, indeed, when, if no justification could be found for this most uncivil and unfeeling custom, a plea might be offered in palliation of it, on the ground that the *Mitre* and the *Mermaid*, or *Will's* and *Button's* ought not to be permitted to decide upon the merit of plays in an authoritative manner, and to dictate to the town what entertainment it was to see, and to pay its money for seeing.

But, now-a-days, what play of any pretensions can be performed any night which, on the next morning, has not half-a-dozen, and by the end of the week, a couple of score newspapers that will tell us all about it: what it was like, how it was liked; and this, in most instances, infinitely better than any jury that could be impanelled from the pit, or any critic that could be persuaded to descend from the gallery, even were he as acute as Addison's renowned trunk-maker himself? But for these papers, indeed, the public would

not know in what spirit the audience of the first night had exercised its self-imposed critical functions; and the press has told us before now of suspected enemies of the author in the house, and has often warned us against being guided by their report of a favorable reception of a piece, because the house was pretty nearly filled by his friends. Mr. Nightingale, in Fielding's great romance, is a good-natured young fellow, but he entreats Tom Jones to go with him "to a new play, which was to be acted that evening, and which a very large party had agreed to damn, from some dislike they had taken to the author, who was a friend to one of Mr. Nightingale's acquaintance." Fielding adds that "this sort of fun our hero, we are ashamed to confess, would willingly have preferred" to an appointment with a lady. Personal hostility—a few disaffected people operating by chance upon the animal spirits of others of the audience who love "a row" for its own sake—has destroyed many plays, and flung some good ones on the shelf for twenty or more years. Was it to force *She Stoops to Conquer* down the throat of the public that Dr. Johnson made one of a large party to cheer that exquisite comedy? No; it was to bring it through the first night, which is everything to a good play, and little indeed to a bad one. It is observable, and perhaps remarkable, that after the first night, an audience never makes any manifestation of dislike. A play soon finds its own level. If, from whatever cause, it is liked, it is run after: if not, any applause verdict of the first night is of no avail.

Let us adopt the practice of Mr. Lovelace, (though by no means a model in other respects) who tells his friend Belford, in *Clarissa*, "I have never given noisy or tumultuous instances of dislike to a new play, if I thought it ever so indifferent. For I concluded, first, that every one was entitled to see quietly what he paid for; and next, as the theatre, the epitome of the world, consisted of pit, boxes, and gallery, it was hard, I thought, if there could be such a performance exhibited, as would not please somebody in that mixed multitude; and if it did, those somebodies had as much right to enjoy their own judgment undisturbedly, as I had to enjoy mine. This was my way of showing disapprobation—I never went again. And as a man is at his option whether he will go to a play or not, he has not the same excuse for expressing his dislike clamorously as if he were compelled to see it."

From Household Words.

#### A LEAF FROM THE PARISH REGISTER.

I HAD once a long search to make among the register-books of Chorley Parish. It extended over many years, and kept me poring, day after day, over the musty pages in the old vestry-room. Abraham Stedman, the clerk,—whom we all know very well in Chorley—kept me company the whole time; and in one of my mid-day pauses,

when we were sharing some bread and cheese and beer over the vestry fire, he told me the following passage in his life:—

I have lived in the parish, said he, going on now for seventy years. When I think of past times, my present friends in the place seem strangers to me. Our old acquaintances die off one by one, and new ones come into their places so gradually, that we scarcely miss them; but one day we look round, and find that the world has passed into strange hands.

[At this point, Abraham Stedman paused and looked at the vestry fire for a few moments: I was silent, waiting for him to proceed.]

The story I am going to tell you is wonderful enough, though there are no ghosts in it. I do not believe in ghosts. If any man ought to have seen ghosts, I ought; for I may say, without any offence to my kind friends of to-day, that all my truest and oldest friends are gone to the ghost-land; and I am sure they would pay me a visit if they could. Besides, I never feared to walk about an old house in the dark at midnight, or to go at that silent time through the churchyard where most of my friends lie, or even into the church, if I had occasion.

On Christmas Eve—I cannot say exactly how many years ago it is now; but it was not very long after I was made clerk—the rector (that was poor Mr. Godby) told me he was in a little perplexity about the sexton's being ill, seeing there would be no one to ring the bells. Now I always made a point of sitting up with the sexton on that night, and taking a hand at the bells; for I could ring them pretty well, and it seemed to me only a little kindness, proper to the season, to offer to keep him company in such a lonely place. He was a much older man than I was, and I knew he was glad of my society. We used to have a little fire in the belfry, and make toast and posset an hour or two after midnight. But this time the sexton was ill, and I promised the rector at once that I would ring the bells; and so it was agreed that I should.

I used to offer my company to the old man because I knew that he was timid and a little superstitious; but, for myself, I did not mind at all going there alone. At exactly half past eleven, on that Christmas eve, I took all the church-keys, and started from my house to fulfil my promise. It was very dark that night, and windy, and several of our old lamps had either dropped out for want of oil, or been blown out by the gusts. I could not see any one in the street; but, as I left my door, I fancied that I heard footsteps a little way behind me. I should not have noticed it then, if it had not been that on several nights previously I had fancied that some person had secretly followed me, as I went about the town. I came up to a little band of carol singers soon after, and stood listening to them a minute or two. When I bade them good night and a merry Christmas, I had forgotten about the footsteps. It was striking the three quarters as I passed over the stile into the churchyard; and just after that I caught a sound like the footsteps again. I looked back, and waited a while; but I could hear nothing more. I was ashamed to walk back a little way, for I began to think that I was becoming a coward, and conjuring up things out of my fear. It was true I had fancied this before that night; but it had never troubled me till then, and so I did not doubt it was some superstitious feeling about my task that was at the bottom of it. "What object could any one have in following a man like me, night after night?" So I went on through the pathway between the gravestones, humming an old ditty.

Now, though I had resolved to banish all thought of the supposed footsteps from my mind,

I could not help turning just half round as I stood with the great key in the lock, and looking about in the direction I had come. I own I was frightened then, for, at about thirty yards' distance, I saw distinctly, as I believed, the dark head of a man peeping at me over the top of one of the tombstones. I stood in the shadow of the church porch, so that it would be difficult for any one at that distance to observe I was looking that way. The tombstone was some way from the gravel path, and out of the line of any one passing through the churchyard, and indeed, as you know, no one would have occasion to pass through the churchyard, unless he were going to the church, like myself. I hesitated for a moment, and then walked briskly towards it; but the head seemed to withdraw itself immediately and disappear. What was more strange, I walked round the very stone, and could see no one near; nor could I hear any movement. A little further was another tombstone, somewhat higher and with a carved top, and I tried to persuade myself that it was this top coming close behind the other stone which had deceived me. But this could not be; for, stand how I would in the church porch, I could not bring the second tombstone exactly in line with the first, to my eye. I felt a little uneasy at this strange fancy; but it would not do to go back, for it was near twelve, and I had promised the rector to be in the belfry, ready to ring out a peal on the stroke of midnight. So I opened the door quickly, closed it behind me, and walked feeling my way down the aisle.

I was quite in the dark, for my lantern was in the vestry-room, and I kept a tinder-box and matches there to light it. I had to grope about for the keyhole of the heavy iron-plated door, and again to fumble among my bunch of keys to find the right one. I am not a man of weak nerve; but a strange sensation came over me, as I stood there in the dark, feeling through all the bunch for the key. The air of the church was close, and had a faint smell of mouldering leather, such as you smell in some libraries. I believe it made me feel faint; for, just then, I had so strong a tingling in the ears, that I seemed to hear the bells already beginning to peal forth in the belfry. I listened, and fancied I heard distinctly that confused jingle which precedes a full peal. The fancy terrified me for the moment, for I knew that I had seen the sexton ill in bed that day, and that even he could not be there, unless he had got the key from me. But when this notion had passed, I set it down for another invention of mine, and began to think the tombstone affair no more worthy of belief than this. So I turned the great key with both my hands; and, opening an inner fire-proof door, I let myself into the vestry-room.

When I was once in there, I knew where to find my lantern and tinder-box in a moment. I always kept them on the second shelf from the ground, in the closet just behind where the plan of the parish-estate at East Haydocke hangs up framed and glazed. But the pew-opener kept her dusters and brushes there also, and we used to have words about her throwing my things out of order sometimes. This time I found that she had

scattered my matches, and I had to stoop down and feel about for them among all the things at the bottom of the closet, which took some time. When I found them, I struck a light and blew the tinder with my breath. I saw the sexton do exactly the same thing one night as I stood in the dark, right at the end of the aisle, and his face reflected the fire at every puff and looked quite devilish as it shone out strongly and faded away again. I mention this because I have thought of it since, and I believe it had something to do with what befel me that night. I lighted my candle, and shut it up in my lantern. It gave a very weak light, and the sides of the lantern were of thick yellow horn, very dirty and dusty with lying in the closet; for I rarely had occasion to go into the church after dark.

Swinging this lantern, then, in one hand, and holding some faggots under the other arm to light my fire with, I went up the steps again into the dark side-aisle. Just at that moment, and as I was shutting the vestry-room door, I suddenly felt a heavy hand laid upon my arm. I started, and cried "Who's there?" letting my lantern fall, so that the light went out. Nobody answered; but some one immediately held me from behind, trying to keep back my arms with extraordinary strength. I was not a weak man then, although I am short; but I struggled long to get round and face my enemy, and just as I was getting a little more free, another one came to his assistance. I called aloud for help; but they stuffed my mouth with something, and swore if I called they would shoot me through the head. Upon this they bound my arms tightly, and led me back into the vestry-room, where I sat on a chair, while they lighted a candle they had with them.

I was a little frightened, as you may suppose; but I thought they were only thieves, who had followed me and got into the church, through my forgetting, in my fright about the tombstone, to fasten the church door; and as I knew that there was very little of value in the vestry-room, I was rather glad to think how they would be baffled. When they got a light, I saw that they had half-masks on. They were well dressed, and although they swore at me, it was evident that they were not common burglars: I could tell that from their language. One laid a long, shining pair of pistols on the baize that covered the table, out of my reach. I knew he did it to intimidate me; for he asked me immediately for my keys, in a loud voice. It was no use my refusing them; I was quite helpless, and they had nothing to do but to take them out of my hands. I told them that the rector kept all the plate in his house, and that there was nothing in any of the closets but a few bottles of wine, and some wax candles. The oldest man, I think, asked me then where the books were kept; but I would not tell him. I determined that, let them do what they might to me, I would keep to my determination not to tell them where the books were. They tried much to terrify me, with words at first, but finding that did not do, the elder one, who was the principal in everything, put his pistol to my ear, and declared that he would ask me three times, and after the third time, fire. Now I was in great terror at this, and never believed myself

so near death as I did then; but I had made a kind of vow to myself, and being in a church, I thought a curse would be upon me if I yielded; so I held my tongue; and, when he found I was firm, instead of firing he flung his pistol down upon the table again, and began sullenly to try all the locks he could find about the room with the keys he had taken from me. In this way he soon found the books he wanted, in a fire-proof safe.

And now both of them began to pore over the books by the light of the candle. They chose two with vellum covers, which I knew to be the marriage-registers—the old and the new one—containing all the marriages that had taken place at old Chorley church for seventy years back. I heard one ask the other if there was no index; for they did not understand our way of indexing, which was merely to write down all the letters of the alphabet, with the numbers of the pages at which names, beginning with each letter could be found—taking the first letter from the bridegroom's name, of course. So they had a long search, each of them turning over the leaves of one book and examining it page by page. I watched their faces, and tried to bear in mind at what part of the book they were, in case they should stop. The one who had the old book came to a place, at last, which seemed to contain what he was looking for. He showed it to his companion, and they conferred together for a moment, in a whisper. Immediately after, the elder one tore out, I thought, some half-dozen leaves. He was going to burn them in the flame of the candle, but his companion stayed him, and he tore them up and put them in his pockets. As soon as they had done this, they turned hastily to depart, as if they were anxious to be gone now their business was done. The older one took some more cord from his pocket, and bound me fast in the great vestry-chair, and drawing the cords round my wrists and ankles, till I cried out with the pain. Then threatening again to return and blow my brains out if they heard my voice, they went out down the aisle, leaving the vestry-room door open. All this happened in little more than half an hour; for the clock chimed the two-quarters after midnight at this very moment.

I sat there two hours alone; but it seemed to me so long that, if I had not heard every quarter chime, I should have expected to see the day dawn through the stained-glass window. It was the dreariest two hours that ever I passed in my life. It was bitter cold, and sitting there helplessly in one position, my limbs grew frozen, and the cords seemed to get tighter and tighter; and stop the movement of my blood. It is no wonder I felt nervous after such a scene. Where I sat, with my back to the wall, I looked right into the church, and the door was left open. I could feel a cold wind rushing from it into the room; and, as I sat staring into the darkness, strange fancies troubled me. I saw dark shapes floating about, as I thought, and peeping at me from the sides of the doorway; and now and then I noticed something like little flakes of light, moving in the gloomy space beyond. I would have given anything for the power to close the door. I fancied strange noises, and began to think of the people



I had known who lay in the vaults just below me or in the graves about the church; and several times a heavy hand seemed to be laid upon my arm again, just in the spot where the man had first seized me. Once I could not persuade myself but that I could hear a low, deep tone from the organ; and again the supposed jangling of the bells annoyed me. So I sat, listening intently, when the whistling of the wind paused out of doors, and hearing and seeing all kinds of strange things, till the chimes went the quarter after two.

Soon after that, I saw a little shining light moving about at the bottom of the church. It came nearer to me, and I heard a footstep. I had fancied so many things, that I was not sure yet whether I was deceived again, but now I heard some one call "Abraham Stedman! Abraham Stedman!" three times. It was the rector's voice, and I answered him; but he did not know where I was till I called to him to come into the vestry-room. He held up his lamp, and was much surprised to find me as I was. I related to him what had happened, and he unbound me. He told me he had lain awake since midnight wondering to hear no bells ringing, and had grown uneasy; for he thought I could not have failed to keep my word, and he knew that I was in the church alone. So at last, he had determined to come in search of me.

This affair made a great stir in Chorley. But we could get no clue to the parties; nor to their object in mutilating the register. They had taken out so many leaves that it was impossible to tell what particular entry they had wanted to destroy; but it was a curious thing, that on examining the skeleton index, we found that, although there were as many as thirty entries in those six leaves, every one of them began with one of three letters. This was a very small clue, and the marriages at that part were all of many years back; so that no one could ever tell what the names were. It was no wonder that we could get no trace of the two men. Before the next year came round, Chorley people had got some new thing to talk about; and, as no one came for a copy of the missing entries in the register, they began to forget all about my adventure.

Eighteen months after the night which I was

bound in the vestry-room, old Mr. Godby sent for me one night, and told me he thought he might yet be able to trace the two strangers. He had got a copy of a London newspaper, in which there was an advertisement addressed to parish-clerks, inquiring for the marriage register of a Mr. Maclean, which took place about thirty years before. The initial of that name was one of our three letters; but as the advertisement mentioned no place, that would seem a very small matter to go upon. But I had always thought that the entry which the two strangers had searched for was on the first of the leaves which they tore out, and that it was the other leaves underneath which were torn with it, to put us off the scent. Now, on this first page, we found there were two entries, both beginning with M; which was something more. Besides, Mr. Godby reasoned, that a register, about which the parties interested were so uncertain, was the very one which, any person knowing of its existence, and having an interest in preventing its appearance, might endeavor to destroy. These three reasons seemed to him so good, that he went up to London about it; and a day or two after, he wrote me to join him. We were soon upon the scent now; for Mr. Godby had ascertained who were the persons likely to be guilty, supposing we were right in our conjecture, that the missing register concerned this family. When I saw one of them, I recognized him immediately, although he had worn a mask in the church. I knew him by his appearance, but when he spoke, I could swear that he was the man, and the officer accordingly arrested him. We got such evidence against him afterwards, as clearly to prove him guilty. People were hung for such a crime then; and it was with great difficulty that he escaped with transportation. He confessed all about it afterwards, and said his companion had gone abroad since, he did not know whither; and I believe they never caught him. His motive—as you may suppose—was to defraud children of large property, by destroying the proofs of their legitimacy; by which he benefited, as the next of kin of the deceased person; but the lawyers set all to rights again, in spite of the missing register.

**THEORY OF ODORS.**—So much has been written on our five physical faculties—sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smelling—that it has occupied a large portion of the various published works from the time when printing was invented. The three senses first named have fairly been "written out;" but not much has yet appeared relating directly or indirectly to the others. Mr. Septimus Piesse now gives us a theory of the olfactory nerve in distinguishing perfumes. Scents appear to influence the smelling nerve in certain definite degrees. There is, as it were, an octave of odors, like an octave in music. Certain odors blend in unison like the notes of an instrument. For instance, almond, heliotrope, vanilla, and orange-blossom blend together, each producing different degrees of a nearly similar impression. Again, we have citron, lemon, verbena, and orange-peel, forming a higher octave

of smells, which blend in a similar manner. The figure is completed by what are called semi-odors, such as rose and rose geranium for the half-note; petty-grain, the note; neroli, a black key, or half-note; followed by fleur d'orange, a full note. Then we have patchouly, sandal-wood, and vitivert, with many others running into each other. From the perfumes already known we may produce, by uniting them in proper proportions, the smell of almost any flower. When perfumes are mixed which strike the same key of the olfactory nerve, no idea of a different scent is produced as the scent dies off from the handkerchief; but when they are not mixed upon this principle, then we hear that such and such a perfume becomes "sickly," or "faint," after it has been in use a short time. — *Bastick's Annals of Pharmacy and Chemistry.*

From The Athenæum.

*The United States Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin: a personal Narrative.*  
By E. K. Kane, M.D. Low & Co., Harper & Brothers, New York.

THE Grinnell Expedition has been fortunate in its historian. Bearing in mind that its results were of a negative character, and that the object of the Expedition was almost left untouched—it would, we think, be difficult to produce a more interesting story of Arctic adventure than the present volume. That much of this interest is due to the extraordinary and unparalleled drift of the ships in the ice, is certainly true, but we have to thank Dr. Kane for the excellent and graphic manner in which he has painted not only this terrible picture, but also all the incidents of the Expedition.

When the delays—which we are informed, are incidental to a large portion of legislation in the United States for scientific objects—threatened to defeat Lady Franklin's appeal to that nation, Mr. Grinnell, a noble-spirited New York merchant, fitted out two of his own ships, and proffered them to his Government. The offer was accepted. The ships were provided with officers and men from the navy, and placed under naval discipline. The command was intrusted to Lieut. De Haven, and our author was appointed medical officer. He modestly states that he only consented to become the historian of the Expedition when the Commander declined the task. An ardent lover of science, and an excellent naturalist, he lost no opportunity of doing all in his power to make scientific researches; and he would doubtless have done more but for the very limited means at his command. But his preparations were most hurried. On the 12th of May, 1850, Dr. Kane was luxuriously bathing in the Gulf of Mexico, when he received a telegraphic despatch ordering him to proceed immediately to New York for duty on the Arctic Expedition; and ten days afterwards he was on his way to icy seas,—having, as he sorrowfully states, had only the fraction of a day to collect, as he best could, a few scientific instruments and the elements of an Arctic wardrobe.

His first sight of the Advance and Rescue, which formed the Expedition, was not cheering. Their united tonnage was only 235 tons, and the crews consisted of men with constitutions for the most part impaired by disease or temporarily broken by dissipation. Mr. Grinnell's noble gift had not met with a suitable return from his Government,—for while everything respecting the equipment of the ships evinced the greatest liberality and forethought on his part, the Government naval arrangements were most defective.

However, by judicious discipline, the crews were soon rendered excellent seamen, and in the face of stern and trying difficulties they were never found to waver.

In the beginning of July the ships were in Baffin's Bay, struggling on amidst icebergs and ice-floes which increased in number and perplexity as Melville Bay was approached. To this period all went well, as the following passage attests:—

We are living luxuriously. Yesterday our French cook, Henri, gave us a salmi of Auks, worthy of the *Trois Freres*; and to-day I enjoyed an Arctic imitation of a trussed partridge. Bear is strong, very strong, and withal most capricious meat; you cannot tell where to find him. One day he is quite beefy and bearable; another hircine, hippuric and damnable. As a part of my Polar practice, I make it a point—albeit I esteem a discriminating palate—to eat of everything; and, in the course of my culinary experience, I have already managed to convert several outcast eatables to good palatable food. Seal is not fishy, but *sealy*; and with a little patience and a good deal of *sauce piquante*, is very excellent diet. The mollenoke is the hardest to manage; the infiltration of fatty matter is rather alarming. But I give my method for future *maitres d'hôtel* who may task themselves in these regions. Cut off his breast; fling everything else to his fellows who are waiting for him outside; rub with soda; wash out the soap thus freely made; parboil and pickle. The bird is, after all, not so detestable early in the season. At the Hudson Bay's settlements they preserve him in salt. Sea-gull is worthy of all honorable mention. The *filet* of a large Ivory one is a morceau between a spring chicken and our own unsurpassed canvasback. As to these little *Guillemots* or Auks (*Uria alle*, or *alke*), *quocunque nomine gaudent*, like all birds feeding on crustaceal life, they are very red in meat, juicy, fat, delicate and flavoursome, something between a blue-wing and a Delaware rail; in a word the perfection of good eating.

The perpetual daylight of the short Arctic summer ranks among the great wonders of those regions. Its singularity has often been described, but probably never so well or so forcibly as by Dr. Kane:—

At first the novelty of this great unvarying day made it pleasing. It was curious to see the midnight Arctic sun set into sun-rise; and pleasant to find that, whether you ate or slept, or idled or toiled, the same daylight was always there. No irksome night forced upon you its system of compulsory alternations. I could dine at midnight, sup at breakfast-time, and go to bed at noon-day; and but for an apparatus of coils and cogs, called a watch, would have been no wiser and no worse. My feeling was at first an extravagant sense of undefined relief, of some vague restraint removed. I seemed to have thrown off the slavery of hours. In fact, I could hardly realize its entirety. The astral lamps, standing, dust-covered, on our lockers (I am quoting the words of my journal), puzzled me, as things obsolete and fanciful. This was instinctive, perhaps; but by-and-by came other feelings. The perpetual light, garish and unfluctuating, disturbed me. I became gradually aware of an unknown excitant, a stimulus, acting constantly, like the diminutive of a cup of strong coffee. My sleep was curtailed and irregular; my meal-hours trod upon each other's heels; and but for stringent regulations of my own imposing, my routine would have been completely broken up. My lot had been cast in the zone of lirodendrons and sugar-maples, in the nearly mid-way latitude of 40 deg. I had been habituated to day and night; and every portion of these two great divisions had for me its periods of peculiar association. Even in the tropics, I had mourned the lost twilight. How much more did I miss the soothing darkness, of which twilight should have been the precursor! I began to feel, with more of emotion than a man writing for others

likes to confess to, how admirable, as a systematic law, is the alternation of day and night—words that type the two great conditions of living nature, action and repose. To those who, with daily labor, earn the daily bread, how kindly the season of sleep! To the drone who, urged by the waning daylight, hastens the deferred task, how fortunate that his procrastination has not a six-months' morrow! To the brain-workers among men, the enthusiasts, who bear irksomely the dark screen which falls upon their day-dreams, how benignant the dear night blessing, which enforces reluctant rest!"

The passage of Melville Bay was an arduous affair, and so tedious that little hope was entertained of reaching Barrow's Straits before the close of the season. But much to their surprise, they arrived at the entrance of Wellington Channel as soon as Capt. Austin's squadron, and were among the first to explore Cape Riley and Beechey Island, where Franklin's traces were struck. The story of that exploration is too well known to require further notice, and we may dismiss it by simply remarking that after a very lucid and able analysis of the facts, Dr. Kane comes to the conclusion that Franklin's expedition passed up Wellington Channel.

After several ineffectual efforts to continue the search which were frustrated by the great accumulation of ice, Lieut. De Haven determined on returning home, his instructions being "to endeavor not to be caught in the ice during the winter, but that he should, after completing his examination for the season, make his escape and return to New York in the fall."

And now commenced the wonderful ice-drift, the account of which reads more like romance than reality. In battling with the ice the Rescue became disabled, and all her crew were removed to the Advance.

Grim Winter was following close upon our heels; and even the captain, sanguine and fearless in emergency as he always proved himself, as he saw the tenacious fields of sludge and pancake thickening around us, began to feel anxious. Mine was a jumble of sensations. I had been desirous to the last degree that we might remain on the field of search, and could hardly be dissatisfied at what promised to realize my wish. Yet I had hoped that our wintering would be near our English friends, that in case of trouble or disease we might mutually sustain each other. But the interval of fifty miles between us, in these inhospitable deserts, was as complete a separation as an entire continent; and I confess that I looked at the dark shadows closing around Barlow's Inlet, the prison from which we cut ourselves on the seventh, just six days before, with feelings as sombre as the landscape itself. The sound of our vessel crunching her way through the new ice is not easy to be described. It was not like the grinding of the old formed ice, nor was it the slushy scraping of sludge. We may all of us remember, in the skating frolics of early days, the peculiar reverberating outcry of a pebble, as we tossed it from us along the edges of an old mill-dam, and heard it dying away in echoes almost musical. Imagine such a tone as this, combined with the whirl of rapid motion, and the rasping noise of close-grained sugar. I was listening to the sound in my little den, after a sorrowful day, close upon zero, trying to warm up my

stiffened limbs. Presently it grew less, then increased, then stopped, then went on again, but jerking and irregular: and then it waned, and waned, and waned away to silence. Down came the Captain: "Doctor, the ice has caught us: we are frozen up." On went my furs at once. As I reached the deck, the wind was there, blowing stiff, and the sails were filled and puffing with it. It was not yet dark enough to hide the smooth surface of ice that filled up the horizon, holding the American expedition in search of Sir John Franklin imbedded in its centre. There we were, literally frozen tight in the mid channel of Wellington's Straits.

But they did not remain long stationary. Imbedded in their huge ice cradle they were carried up Wellington Channel as far north as  $75^{\circ} 24'$ , and then saw land to the north-east to which the name of Grinnell was given, and which in the chart attached to Dr. Kane's volume is identical with that laid down in our charts under the name of Prince Albert.

We have not space to follow Dr. Kane in his very temperate argument respecting the priority of his countrymen in this discovery,—but we must say, after a very careful perusal of Dr. Kane's case, we are of opinion that what the American Expedition saw was not Baillie Hamilton Island, which is some 60 min. west of the land claimed as their discovery, but that, assuming their chronometers to have been accurate, which we are told was the fact, they were the first to discover what we have since called Prince Albert Land.

In the latter end of September the ships commenced drifting out of Wellington Channel, always encompassed by huge masses of ice. Thus in the midst of their ice island which was five miles long and three broad, compelled to be inactive spectators of scenes wilder than imagination can conceive, ignorant for many days how they were drifting, the two ships were carried out of Lancaster Sound and down Baffin's Bay, being finally released on the 5th of June. During this long and trying period the crews behaved nobly. The cold was excessive. Scurvy, which made rapid head against their feeble hygienic resources, attacked officers and men, — and yet, when the Expedition was once more in open water, and it was found that the ships were but slightly injured, the gallant commander determined to renew the search for Franklin.

It is well, perhaps, that he was again foiled. The ice proved impassable, and the fast-waning season warned Lieut. De Haven that to persist longer in the trial would be to run the risk of spending another winter like the last. Accordingly the Expedition sailed to New York, where it arrived on the 30th of September, 1851, without the loss of a single man.

Besides the account of the voyage, which is full of startling incidents, Dr. Kane enters at length into the physical geography of the Arctic regions. His book, which is profusely and admirably illustrated, is one of the most interesting of the kind that we have seen, and deserves a place by the side of our most cherished records of Arctic adventure.

From Household Words.

## THE LONG VOYAGE.

WHEN the wind is blowing and the sleet or rain is driving against the dark windows, I love to sit by the fire, thinking of what I have read in books of voyage and travel. Such books have had a strong fascination for my mind from my earliest childhood; and I wonder it should have come to pass that I never have been round the world, never have been shipwrecked, ice-environed, tomahawked, or eaten.

This time of year is crowded with thick-coming fancies. Sitting on my ruddy hearth in the twilight of New Year's Eve, I find incidents of travel rise around me from all the latitudes and longitudes of the globe. They observe no order or sequence, but appear and vanish as they will—"come like shadows, so depart." Columbus, alone upon the sea with his disaffected crew, looks over the waste of waters from his high station on the poop of his ship, and sees the first uncertain glimmer of the light, rising and falling with the waves, like a torch in the bark of some fisherman, which is the shining star of a new world. Bruce is caged in Abyssinia, surrounded by the gory horrors which shall often startle him out of his sleep at home when years have passed away. Franklin, come to the end of his unhappy overland journey—would that it had been his last!—lies perishing with hunger with his brave companions: each emaciated figure stretched upon its miserable bed without the power to rise: all, dividing the weary days between their prayers, their remembrances of the dear ones at home, and conversation on the pleasures of eating; the last-named topic being ever present to them, likewise, in their dreams. All the African travellers, wayworn, solitary, and sad, submit themselves again to drunken, murderous, man-selling despots, of the lowest order of humanity; and Mungo Park, fainting under a tree and succored by a woman, gratefully remembers how his Good Samaritan has always come to him in woman's shape, the wide world over.

A shadow on the wall in which my mind's eye can discern some traces of a rocky sea-coast, recalls to me a fearful story of travel derived from that unpromising narrator of such stories, a parliamentary blue-book. A convict is its chief figure, and this man escapes with other prisoners from a penal settlement. It is an island, and they seize a boat, and get to the main land. Their way is by a rugged and precipitous sea-shore, and they have no earthly hope of ultimate escape, for, the party of soldiers despatched by an easier course to cut them off, must inevitably arrive at their distant bourne long before them, and retake them if by any hazard they survive the horrors of the way. Famine, as they all must have foreseen, besets them early in their course. Some of the party die and are eaten; some are murdered by the rest and eaten. This one awful creature eats his fill, and sustains his strength, and lives on to be recaptured and taken back. The unrelatable experiences through which he has passed have been so tremendous, that he is not hanged as he might be, but goes back to his old chained gang-work. A little time,

and he tempts one other prisoner away, seizes another boat, and flies once more—necessarily in the old hopeless direction, for he can take no other. He is soon cut off, and met by the pursuing party, face to face, upon the beach. He is alone. In his former journey he acquired an unappeasable relish for his dreadful food. He urged the new man away, expressly to kill him and eat him. In the pockets on one side of his coarse convict-dress, are portions of the man's body, on which he is regaling; in the pockets on the other side, is an untouched store of salted pork (stolen before he left the island) for which he has no appetite. He is taken back, and he is hanged. But I shall never see that sea-beach on the wall or in the fire, without him, solitary monster, eating as he prowls along, while the sea rages and rises at him.

Captain Bligh (a worse man to be entrusted with arbitrary power there could scarcely be) is handed over the side of the *Bounty*, and turned adrift on the wide ocean in an open boat, by order of Fletcher Christian, one of his officers, at this very minute. Another flash of my fire, and "Thursday October Christian," five-and-twenty years of age, son of the dead and gone Fletcher by a savage mother, leaps aboard His Majesty's ship *Briton*, hove to off Pitcairn's Island; says his simple grace before eating, in good English; and knows that a pretty little animal on board is called a dog, because in his childhood he had heard of such strange creatures from his father and the other mutineers, grown gray under the shade of the Bread-fruit trees, speaking of their lost country far away.

See the *Halsewell*, East Indiaman, outward bound, driving madly on a January night towards the rocks near Seacombe, on the island of Purbeck! The captain's two dear daughters are aboard, and five other ladies. The ship has been driving many hours, has seven feet of water in her hold, and her mainmast has been cut away. The description of her loss, familiar to me from my early boyhood, seems to be read aloud as she rushes to her destiny.

About two in the morning of Friday the sixth of January, the ship still driving, and approaching very fast to the shore, Mr. Henry Meriton, the second mate, went again into the cuddy, where the captain then was. Another conversation taking place, Captain Pierce expressed extreme anxiety for the preservation of his beloved daughters, and earnestly asked the officer if he could devise any method of saving them. On his answering with great concern, that he feared it would be impossible, but that their only chance would be to wait for morning, the captain lifted up his hands in silent and distressful ejaculation.

At this dreadful moment, the ship struck, with such violence as to dash the heads of those standing in the cuddy against the deck above them, and the shock was accompanied by a shriek of horror that burst at one instant from every quarter of the ship.

Many of the seamen, who had been remarkably inattentive and remiss in their duty during a great part of the storm, now poured upon deck, where no exertions of the officers could keep them, while their assistance might have been useful. They had actually skulked in their hammocks, leaving the

working of the pumps and other necessary labors to the officers of the ship, and the soldiers, who had made uncommon exertions. Roused by a sense of their danger, the same seamen, at this moment, in frantic exclamations, demanded of heaven and their fellow-sufferers that succor which their own efforts timely made, might possibly have procured.

The ship continued to beat on the rocks; and soon bilging, fell with her broadside towards the shore. When she struck, a number of the men climbed up the ensign staff, under an apprehension of her immediately going to pieces.

Mr. Meriton, at this crisis, offered to these unhappy beings the best advice which could be given; he recommended that all should come to the side of the ship lying lowest on the rocks, and singly to take the opportunities which might then offer, of escaping to the shore.

Having thus provided, to the utmost of his power, for the safety of the desponding crew, he returned to the round-house, where, by this time, all the passengers, and most of the officers had assembled. The latter were employed in offering consolation to the unfortunate ladies; and, with unparalleled magnanimity, suffering their compassion for the fair and amiable companions of their misfortunes to prevail over the sense of their own danger.

In this charitable work of comfort, Mr. Meriton now joined, by assurances of his opinion, that the ship would hold together till the morning, when all would be safe. Captain Pierce observing one of the young gentlemen loud in his exclamations of terror, and frequently cry that the ship was parting, cheerfully bid him be quiet, remarking that though the ship should go to pieces, he would not, but would be safe enough.

It is difficult to convey a correct idea of the scene of this deplorable catastrophe, without describing the place where it happened. The Halsewell struck on the rocks at a part of the shore where the cliff is of vast height, and rises almost perpendicular from its base. But at this particular spot, the foot of the cliff is excavated into a cavern of ten or twelve yards in depth, and of breadth equal to the length of a large ship. The sides of the cavern are so nearly upright, as to be of extremely difficult access; and the bottom is strewn with sharp and uneven rocks, which seem, by some convulsion of the earth, to have been detached from its roof.

The ship with her broadside opposite to the mouth of this cavern, with her whole length stretched almost from side to side of it. But when she struck, it was too dark for the unfortunate persons on board to discover the real magnitude of their danger, and the extreme horror of such a situation.

In addition to the company already in the round-house, they had admitted three black women and two soldiers' wives; who, with the husband of one of them, had been allowed to come in, though the seamen, who had tumultuously demanded entrance to get the lights, had been opposed and kept out by Mr. Rogers and Mr. Brimer, the third and fifth mates. The numbers there were, therefore, now increased to near fifty. Captain Pierce sat on a chair, a cot, or some other movable, with a daughter on each side, whom he alternately pressed to his affectionate breast. The rest of the melancholy assembly were seated on the deck, which was strewn with musical instruments, and the wreck of furniture and other articles.

Here also Mr. Meriton, after having cut several wax-candles in pieces, and stuck them up in various parts of the round-house, and lighted up all the glass lanterns he could find, took his seat, intending to wait the approach of dawn; and then

assist the partners of his dangers to escape. But, observing that the poor ladies appeared parched and exhausted, he brought a basket of oranges and prevailed on some of them to refresh themselves by sucking a little of the juice. At this time they were all tolerably composed, except Miss Mansel, who was in hysteric fits on the floor of the deck of the round-house.

But on Mr. Meriton's return to the company, he perceived a considerable alteration in the appearance of the ship; the sides were visibly giving way; the deck seemed to be lifting, and he discovered other strong indications that she could not hold much longer together. On this account, he attempted to go forward to look out, but immediately saw that the ship had separated in the middle, and that the fore-part having changed its position, lay rather further out towards the sea. In such an emergency, when the next moment might plunge him into eternity, he determined to seize the present opportunity, and follow the example of the crew and the soldiers, who were now quitting the ship in numbers, and making their way to the shore, though quite ignorant of its nature and description.

Among other expedients, the ensign-staff had been unshipped, and attempted to be laid between the ship's side and some of the rocks, but without success, for it snapped asunder before it reached them. However, by the light of a lantern, which a seaman handed through the sky-light of the round-house to the deck, Mr. Meriton discovered a spar which appeared to be laid from the ship's side to the rocks, and on this spar he resolved to attempt his escape.

Accordingly, lying down upon it, he thrust himself forward; however he soon found that it had no communication with the rock; he reached the end of it and then slipped off, receiving a very violent bruise in his fall, and before he could recover his legs, he was washed off by the surge. He now supported himself by swimming, until a returning wave dashed him against the back part of the cavern. Here he laid hold of a small projection in the rock, but was so much benumbed that he was on the point of quitting it, when a seaman, who had already gained a footing, extended his hand, and assisted him until he could secure himself a little on the rock; from which he clambered on a shelf still higher and out of the reach of the surf.

Mr. Rogers, the third mate, remained with the captain and the unfortunate ladies and their companions nearly twenty minutes after Mr. Meriton had quitted the ship. Soon after the latter left the round-house, the captain asked what was become of him, to which Mr. Rogers replied, that he was gone on deck to see what could be done. After this, a heavy sea breaking over the ship, the ladies exclaimed, "Oh poor Meriton! he is drowned! had he stayed with us he would have been safe!" and they all, particularly Miss Mary Pierce, expressed great concern at the apprehension of his loss.

The sea was now breaking in at the fore part of the ship, and reached as far as the mainmast. Captain Pierce gave Mr. Rogers a nod, and they took a lamp, and went together into the stern-gallery, where, after viewing the rocks for some time, Captain Pierce asked Mr. Rogers if he thought there was any possibility of saving the girls; to which he replied, he feared that there was none; for they could only discover the black face of the perpendicular rock, and not the cavern which afforded shelter to those who escaped. They then returned to the round-house, where Mr. Rogers hung up the lamp, and Captain Pierce sat down between his two daughters.

The sea continuing to break in very fast, Mr.



Macmanus, a midshipman, and Mr. Schutz, a passenger, asked Mr. Rogers what they could do to escape. "Follow me," he replied; and they all went into the stern-gallery, and from thence to the upper-quarter-gallery on the poop. While there, a very heavy sea fell on board, and the round house gave way; Mr. Rogers heard the ladies shriek at intervals, as if the water reached them; the noise of the sea at other times drowned their voices.

Mr. Brimer had followed him to the poop, where they remained together about five minutes, when, on the breaking of this heavy sea, they jointly seized a hen-coop. The same wave which proved fatal to some of those below, carried him and his companion to the rock, on which they were violently dashed and miserably bruised.

Here on the rock were twenty-seven men; but it now being low water, and as they were convinced that on the flowing of the tide all must be washed off, many attempted to get to the back or the sides of the cavern, beyond the reach of the returning sea. Scarcely more than six, besides Mr. Rogers and Mr. Brimer, succeeded.

Mr. Rogers, on gaining this station, was so nearly exhausted, that had his exertions been protracted only a few minutes longer, he must have sunk under them. He was now prevented from joining Mr. Meriton, by at least twenty men between them, none of whom could move without the imminent peril of his life.

They found that a very considerable number of the crew, seamen, and soldiers, and some petty officers, were in the same situation as themselves, though many who had reached the rocks below, perished in attempting to ascend. They could yet discern some part of the ship, and in their dreary station solaced themselves with the hopes of its remaining entire until day-break; for in the midst of their own distress, the sufferings of the females on board affected them with the most poignant anguish; and every sea that broke inspired them with terror for their safety.

But, alas, their apprehensions were too soon realized! Within a very few minutes of the time that Mr. Rogers gained the rock, an universal shriek, which long vibrated in their ears, in which the voice of female distress was lamentably distinguished, announced the dreadful catastrophe. In a few moments all was hushed, except the roaring of the winds and the dashing of the waves; the wreck was buried in the deep, and not an atom of it was ever afterwards seen.

The most beautiful and affecting incident I know, associated with a shipwreck, succeeds this dismal story for a winter night. The Grosvenor, East Indian homeward bound, goes ashore on the coast of Caffraria. It is resolved that the officers, passengers, and crew, in number one hundred and thirty-five souls, shall endeavor to penetrate on foot, across trackless deserts, infested by wild beasts and cruel savages, to the Dutch settlements at the Cape of Good Hope. With this forlorn object before them, they finally separate into two parties—never more to meet on earth.

There is a solitary child among the passengers—a little boy of seven years old who has no relation there; and when the first party is moving away he cries after some member of it who has been kind to him. The crying of a child might be supposed to be a little thing to men in such great extremity; but it touches them, and he is immediately taken into that detachment.

From which time forth, this child is sublimely made a sacred charge. He is pushed, on a little raft, across broad rivers, by the swimming sailors; they carry him by turns through the deep sand and long grass (he patiently walking at all other times); they share with him such putrid fish as they find to eat; they lie down and wait for him when the rough carpenter, who becomes his especial friend, lags behind. Beset by lions and tigers, by savages, by thirst, by hunger, by death in a crowd of ghastly shapes, they never—O Father of all mankind, thy name be blessed for it!—forget this child. The captain stops exhausted, and his faithful coxswain goes back and is seen to sit down by his side, and neither of the two shall be any more beheld until the great last day; but, as the rest go on for their lives, they take the child with them. The carpenter dies of poisonous berries eaten in starvation; and the steward, succeeding to the command of the party, succeeds to the sacred guardianship of the child.

God knows all he does for the poor baby; how he cheerfully carries him in his arms when he himself is weak and ill; how he feeds him when he himself is gripped with want; how he folds his ragged jacket round him, lays his little worn face with a woman's tenderness upon his sunburnt breast, soothes him in his sufferings, sings to him as he limps along, unmindful of his own parched and bleeding feet. Divided for a few days from the rest, they dig a grave in the sand and bury their good friend the cooper—these two companions alone in the wilderness—and then the time comes when they both are ill and beg their wretched partners in despair, reduced and few in number now, to wait by them one day. They wait by them one day, they wait by them two days. On the morning of the third, they move very softly about, in making their preparations for the resumption of their journey; for, the child is sleeping by the fire, and it is agreed with one consent that he shall not be disturbed until the last moment. The moment comes, the fire is dying—the child is dead.

His faithful friend, the steward, lingers but a little while behind him. His grief is great, he staggers on for a few days, lies down in the desert, and dies. But he shall be reunited in his immortal spirit—who can doubt it!—with the child, where he and the poor carpenter shall be raised up with the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

As I recall the dispersal and disappearance of nearly all the participants in this once famous shipwreck (a mere handful being recovered at last), and the legends that were long afterwards revived from time to time among the English officers at the Cape, of a white woman with an infant, said to have been seen weeping outside a savage hut far in the interior, who was whisperingly associated with the remembrance of the missing ladies saved from the wrecked vessel, and who was often sought but never found, thoughts of another kind of travel come into my mind.

Thoughts of a voyager unexpectedly summoned from home, who travelled a vast distance, and

could never return. Thoughts of this unhappy wayfarer in the depths of his sorrow, in the bitterness of his anguish, in the helplessness of his self-reproach, in the desperation of his desire to set right what he had left wrong, and do what he had left undone.

For, there were many things he had neglected. Little matters while he was at home and surrounded by them, but things of mighty moment when he was at an immeasurable distance. There were many, many blessings that he had inadequately felt, there were many trivial injuries that he had not forgiven, there was love that he had but poorly returned, there was friendship that he had too lightly prized; there were a million kind words that he might have spoken, a million kind looks that he might have given, uncountable slight easy deeds in which he might have been most truly great and good. O for a day (he would exclaim) for but one day to make amends! But the sun never shone upon that happy day, and out of his remote captivity he never came.

Why does this traveller's fate obscure, on New Year's Eve, the other histories of travellers with which my mind was filled but now, and cast a solemn shadow over me! Must I one day make his journey? Even so. Who shall say, that I may not then be tortured by such late regrets: that I may not then look from my exile on my empty place and undone work? I stand upon a sea shore, where the waves are years. They break and fall, and I may little heed them: but, with every wave the sea is rising, and I know that it will float me on this traveller's voyage at last.

From the Examiner, 4 Feb.

#### DIPLOMATIC COSTUME.

THE American Minister was excluded from the House of Lords on the occasion of the opening of Parliament, by the rule requiring diplomatic costume, the relaxation of which to meet his peculiar case was, it is said, refused. It will be remembered that some months ago the Government of the United States issued a circular to its diplomatic agents, directing them to abstain from show and finery, and to observe strictly a republican simplicity in appearances and establishments. It was consequently impossible for the American Minister to comply with the Lord Chamberlain's rule of dress in the understood sense of it, our Court etiquette requiring what his own Government has peremptorily forbidden. But what, let us ask, is diplomatic costume? It is not necessarily blue and a blaze of gold embroidery. It varies with the habits of nations and tastes of courts. The Persian does not appear like a blue-bottle fly. The Turk has his peculiar dress. And the American also has his appointed diplomatic costume in a plain black coat. His uniform is the uniform of simplicity. The plainness may be in very bad taste; but if, instead of a black coat, it was the pleasure of the American Government that its diplomatic agents should clothe themselves in smock frocks, it would be incumbent on our Court to receive them in that apparel. What right can we have to force the representative of another power into a particular costume, or in default to slap the door

in his face? The representatives of different States may have different modes of wearing their gold. The monarchical wear it outside, the republican carries it inside. The plain black coat is typical of the nation whose resources are not squandered in appearances, but husbanded so as to make a mighty power in reserve available whenever occasion may arise.

It is to be regretted that the American Minister did not stand upon his right to admission in the dress diplomatically assigned to him by his Government. Upon the Lord Chamberlain would then have been thrown the absurd difficulty of defining what is or what is not a diplomatic dress, and a new boundary question would have arisen in the provinces of tailoring and embroidery. After all, gold lace is not identical with dignity. A savage chief, who desired to equip himself completely in the English fashion, went to choose a hat, and could not be persuaded that the fittest choice was not the livery-hat with the very broadest gold-lace band and binding. All others appeared mean and unsuitable to him. There may be the same sort of distinction between the servants of nations in and out of livery, as there is between the servants of private establishments, and the lace may not always express the highest pretensions and dignity.

Court etiquette may be a thing of great worth, but of greater value still, according to our notion, is the cultivation of a good feeling between this country and the people of the United States, a cordial alliance with whom, always important, was never so vitally important as now. Our Ministers are profuse and loud in their professions of anxiety for peace, but earnest of this feeling should be given in deeds, and every needless occasion of offence should be scrupulously avoided, especially towards a people peculiarly sensitive and tenacious. Questions between this country and the United States lie before us, the difficulty of managing which successfully may be incalculably increased by affronts to the national pride, disposing the people to seize opportunity for quarrel. The real lovers of peace are to be distinguished, not by their protestations of attachment to it when it is in danger, but by their sedulous cultivation of international good will and kindly sentiment at all times and upon all occasions, small as well as great.

Mr. Buchanan knows the respect in which the nation he represents is held in this country, and cannot but have observed that there is no member of the diplomatic body to whom more court is paid, more attention or more honor shown; and we are quite certain that the exclusion from the ceremonial of the 31st ult., for the ridiculous cause assigned, is the only cause of umbrage that has occurred during his residence here; but in America the circumstance will be regarded apart from all that mitigates and limits its offensiveness in the mind of the Minister, and it will be considered as a studied slight or determined insult. It is but a nonsense after all; a place at a show, may be superficially observed; but how many of the worst quarrels have sprung from the feelings excited by trifles.

From the New Monthly Magazine.

# AMERICAN AUTHORSHIP.

NO. XI. — WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.

MANY a magnificent ideal of the Historian has been put on paper. Sièyes could not fabricate a constitution more easily than the Critic will limn you a fancy portrait of the possible Historian. To transfer the Constitution from its pigeon-hole to practice, was quite another matter; and so is the flesh-and-blood fulfilment of the idealized writer of history. Nevertheless, it is well to refer sometimes to some such ideal, however lofty—indeed the loftier the better—if only to restrain a too implicit confidence in, and plenary indulgence towards, some favorite author in this line of things. The true historian must possess, according to an "Able Editor," many of the faculties of an epic poet; aiming at his severe purpose, his cumulative interest, his conjunction of grandeur in the whole with simplicity in the parts—the solemnity of his spirit, the general gravity of his tone, the episodes in which he gathers up, as in baskets, the fragments of his story,—the high argument, or moral, less standing-up from, than living through, the whole strain—his union of imaginative and intellectual power, and his perspicuity, power, and clear energy of language. "Besides all this, the historian must do the following things: he must be able to live in and reproduce the age of which he writes; he must sympathize with its ruling passions and purposes, without being swallowed up or identified with them; he must understand the points, alike of agreement and of difference, between the past age and his own time; he must exercise a judicial impartiality in determining the deeds, motives, purposes, and pretexts of various parties; he must make the proper degree of allowance—nor more nor less—when judging of dubious or criminal conduct, for diversities of moral codes, national customs, and states of progress; he must practise the power of severe selection of facts, looking at them always in their representative character; he must unite broad views of the general current of events, and of the advance of the whole of society, with intense rushing lights, cast upon particular points and pinnacles of his subject; he must have a distinct and valid theory of progress; he must map out the under-currents, as well as the upper streams of his story; he must add a love of the picturesque, the beautiful, and the heroic, to an intense passion for truth; he must give to general principles the incarnate interest of facts, and make facts the graceful symbols of general principles; he must, in fine, be acquainted not only with the philosophy, science, statistics, and poetry, but with the religion of his art, and regard Clio not as a muse, but as a goddess." Such, an historian of the Scottish Covenanters professes to be his ideal, "in part," of a historian after the "own heart" of truth, love, and beauty; such the perilous preface to his own essay in historical composition. Rasselas would say to him, Thou hast convinced me it is impossible to be an historian.

Turn from the magnificent ideal to the extant

Acts and Monuments of the Muse of History. Hear her apostrophized by a "Popular Lecturer." "O venerable daughter of Mnemosyne, I doubt every single statement you ever made since your ladyship was a Muse! For all your grave airs and high pretensions, you are not a whit more trustworthy than some of your lighter sisters on whom your partisans look down. You bid me listen to a general's oration to his soldiers. Nonsense! He no more made it than Turpin made his dying speech at Newgate. You pronounce a panegyric of a hero; I doubt it, and say you flatter outrageously. You utter the condemnation of a loose character; I doubt it, and think you are prejudiced and take the side of the Dons. You offer me an autobiography; I doubt all autobiographies I ever read, except those, perhaps, of Mr. Robinson Crusoe, Mariner, and writers of his class."

Cold comfort, my masters, for aspiring historians, whether nearing the arctic ideal of the "Able Editor" or the antarctic real of the "Popular Lecturer"—wide as the poles asunder, alike icebound, unnavigable by common seamanship. The model historian is a being of whose faultless proportions Thucydides is but a fractional type, Herodotus but a first rude daub, Livy but a prolix hint, Tacitus but an abrupt reminder. The actual historian is a pretentious driveller, who, in historicizing, *ipso facto* takes out a license to tell lies; black lies by the gross, and white lies *carte blanche*; who is to be coughed down as an impostor, and accounted a reckless importer of fictions, albeit he write of Florence and subscribe himself Machiavelli, or follow the madcap Charles of Sweden as Voltaire, or be shelved among "standard" authors under the names of Sismondi, Guizot, Mueller, Niebuhr, Hallam, Grote, Macaulay, Bancroft,—or among "classics," of high-and-dry, highest-and-driest eminence, as Robertson and his respectable congeners. The doctrine, one may say, teaches immaculate conception; the fact, absolute depravity. The precept requires a nature not a little lower than the angels, but their fellow, their peer, their equal; the performance argues a creatureship oscillating between knave and fool, quack and dolt, charlatan and clown.

Meanwhile, and in the set teeth of this fierce antithesis of ideal and real, of *à priori* sublimity and *à posteriori* degradation, we count ourselves happy to be old-fashioned enough and credulous enough, to retain a quantum of faith in the world's canonized histories, and of simple gratitude towards the world's favorite historians. Notwithstanding the brilliant Frenchman's *mot*, that all history is founded on a general conspiracy against truth, we somehow shirk the idea of a man like Mr. Prescott being among the conspirators. And on the whole we find ourselves accepting without much demur, without much jealous misgiving or infidel distrust, the elaborate and erudite stories he gives us, of the lives and deaths of Ferdinand and Isabella, of the doughty emprise of Cortes and his braves, and the bloody progress of Pizarro in Peru. Mr. Prescott is, to use a Coleridgean epithet, a highly "reliable" historian, at least with those who have not wholly lost the faculty of reliance. He is confessedly eminent in research, and careful in the

collation, and the "eclectic review" of his materials. His has been in no faint degree the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties—similar, though happily in a milder form, to that of Augustin Thierry, whose loss of sight is a calamity aggravated by other ills that, in his case, flesh is heir to, and spirit so bravely battles against. Mr. Prescott has not allowed defective vision to excuse him from minute scrutiny of the multifarious stores to be consulted. He does not write in the dark. His testimonies are open to "ocular" demonstration. The style he adopts is fluent and compact, but noways vigorous or sinewy in structure: indeed it sometimes palls a little on the taste from its almost languid monotony of "good writing." Nor do the thoughts breathe, any more than the words burn, with strong vital heat. There is uniformly a patient and lucid narrative of events, there is a diligent summary of generals from particulars, there is an able digest of the original crudities of matter; but deep philosophic reflection there is not, nor "energetic reason," nor the enthusiasm of conscious power. He never fires up—never soars—nor quits the safe and serene haunts of *comme il faut*. He is clear of any charge of nationality in his authorship; his pages would become the most cultivated habitué of the Bodleian, and smack nothing of the peculiarities of Boston, U. S.—a fact which some people, whose querulousness we fail to understand, have imputed to him as a fault—as though his chronicles of Spain and her colonies in the far west ought, if written by an American at all, to be saturated with the quaint spirit of Uncle Sam at Home, and vocal with the genu-rine nasal tones of the Bay State.

If Mr. Prescott has a rich theme in what we believe to be the present subject of his labors, the era of Philip the Second,—he was perhaps still more fortunate in the choice of his first essay in historical composition—that of Ferdinand and Isabella. We miss, indeed, the master-hand of the grand historical painter, in his tableaux of scenes so imposing and so exciting as abound in that age of Columbuses and Gonsalvos; the artist is rather an engraver—smooth, finished, correct, but cold. Yet is the work a most attractive one in points of extrinsic as well as intrinsic charm. The author has expressed his fear of having been too strongly biased in favor of his principal actors, by dint of the natural tendency of familiarity with noble or interesting characters to beget a "partiality, akin to friendship, in the historian's mind;" and we own an assent to the justice of this apprehension, so far as our own estimate of the character of Ferdinand is concerned: but, taking Mr. Prescott on the whole, he is far from being chargeable with anything like one-sided enthusiasm, or exaggerated prepossessions; and it may be properly said of him, in the words of M. Villemain, that "si quelques événements n'offrent pas dans ses récits le pathétique terrible auquel s'attendait l'imagination du lecteur, on n'en doit pas moins apprécier la finesse impartiale de son esprit." The portraiture of Isabella seems to us unexceptionable—a Queen of Hearts not undeserving of the Shakspearean *éloge*:

A pattern to all princes living with her,  
And all that shall succeed: Sheba was never  
More covetous of wisdom, and fair virtue,  
Than this pure soul.

The glittering stage is thronged with other well-graced actors, Christian and Moorish: the fiery Ponce de Leon, "name of fear" to infidel Granada; and Medina Sidonia, his deadly yet magnanimous foe; and the sagacious Cardinal Mendoza, wise in council, and practical of purpose; and ambitious old El Zagal; and mild, degenerate Abdallah, at whose tearful flight,

Down from the Alhambra's minarets were all the  
crescents flung,

and the Christian bell outrang the Moorish horn, and *Te Deum* was chanted by churchmen militant and triumphant in the Alcala. Columbus too, confronts us; and Charles the Eighth; and the "Great Captain," Gonsalvo de Cordova; and Alonso de Aguilar, *y eterna fama ganada*; and Ximenes, stern, lofty, capacious soul, that purer, nobler, but more bigoted Richelieu of Spain. An august assemblage—convened on a broad and elevated platform—and taking part in a prolonged drama full of fifth acts and majestic crises of fate!

In the selection of his second historical work—the story of the Conquest of Mexico—Mr. Prescott is again happy in a subject of surpassing interest. With attractive narrative ease he records the embarkation of Cortes—one of those "hardy natures that require the heats of excited action to unfold their energies," like plants, dwarfish and barren in temperate latitudes, but exuberantly fruitful in the burning tropics;—the great battle with the Indians of Tabasco—the pagan iconoclasm of catholic image-worshippers—the feud with republican Tlascala, city of stern warriors whose war attire so fascinated Madoc, when, in

—golden glitterance, and the feather-mail  
More glittering than gold . . .  
With war songs and wild music they came on.

Then the historian brings before us the battle-pieces in which they suffer so ruinously;—the massacre of the Cholulans, news whereof first made the Aztec emperor tremble on his throne among the mountains;—the ascent of the great volcano (Popocatepetl) by the cavaliers, "who, not content with the dangers that lay in their path, seemed to court them from the mere Quixotic love of adventure;" one of them descending in a basket some four hundred feet into the steaming abyss, and repeating the visit till he had collected sulphur enough for the wants of the army, though Cortes concluded "on the whole" that it would be less "inconvenient" to import their powder from Spain;—the passage of the Valley of Mexico, and entrance into that imperial city of burnished battlements, and "far-circling walls," and "garden groves, and stately palaces, and temples mountain size;"—the description of the capital, its mansions fulgent with jasper and porphyry, its Venetian pomp of

bridges and canals, its far-spread suburbs, its palaces and museums, its sanitary commissions and street orderlies and water-works, its zoological collections and botanical gardens, and exhibitions of native "Irish giants" and "Tom Thumbs" (or "Aztec Lilliputians"), its royal household, royal habits, royal bill of fare, and royal wardrobe;—the picture of the Great Temple (*teocalli*), of massive pyramidal structure, with its altars for human sacrifice, its colossal images of hideous aspect, its chapels foul to scent and sight with relics of the slaughter-house, its "hell," or dragon's mouth "bristling with sharp fangs and dropping with blood," in whose horrid throat the shuddering Spaniards saw by one furtive glance, "implements of sacrifice and abominations of fearful import;"—the extravagantly bold seizure of Montezuma, his confinement in irons, and the execution of his officers;—the rise and progress of Aztec discontent, and its outbreak consequent on the infamous massacre by Cortes' lieutenant (Alvarado); the attempted mediation of Montezuma, its indignant rejection by his subjects, his fall by their hand, his languishing and death, "drawing his last breath in the halls of the stranger, a lonely outcast in the heart of his own capital; the Spaniards' retreat and slaughter on the "Melancholy Night" (*Noche Triste*, July 1st, 1520), leaving them in appearance a horde of haggard, furnished outlaws, whose thinned and shattered ranks drew tears from even their indomitable chief, whose soul was like a star amid deepest glooms of night,—like the red planet Mars, "the star of the unconquered will,"

Serene, and resolute, and still,  
And calm, and self-possessed.

The exciting record of the siege and final surrender of Mexico, despite the dauntless heroism of Guatemozin, closes with the reflection, that not by Spaniards alone was the Conquest achieved, that "the Indian empire was in a manner conquered by Indians," that the Aztec monarchy fell by the hands of its own subjects, under the direction of European sagacity and science. "Had it been united, it might have bidden defiance to the invaders. As it was, the capital was dissevered from the rest of the country; and the bolt which might have passed off comparatively harmless had the empire been cemented by a common principle of loyalty and patriotism, now found its way into every crack and crevice of the ill-compacted fabric, and buried it in its own ruins."

Mr. Prescott takes, on the whole, an indulgent view of the character of Cortes. He sums up its features as those of a man mainly distinguished by constancy, not to be daunted by danger, baffled by disappointment, or wearied out by delay—a man avaricious yet liberal, bold to desperation, yet cautious and calculating in his plans, courteous and affable yet inexorably stern, lax in his notions of morality, yet in forms of faith an almost graceless zealot. A true knight-errant, yet a great general—who compelled to unity and submissive action a motley camp of mercenaries—greedy adventurers, sedy hidalgos, broken-down cavaliers, vagabonds flying from justice,

and wild tribes of Indians eager to cut one another's throats. Not a vulgar conqueror\*—not meanly athirst for gold—not cruel, at least as compared with most of those who followed his iron trade; and, in fine, a chieftain who might, without much violence, have sat for Scott's portrait of Marmion, in those lines which picture a captain, "boisterous as March, yet fresh as May," of influence enough to "lead his host from India's fires to Zembla's frost." A very different summing up of the Marquis of the Valley's characteristics, is, however, possible; and, it may be, preferable. But an historian usually comes to regard himself as bound by a special retainer in the cause of his hero. Even Mr. Macaulay might incline to find Marlborough sufferable, were he to undertake a biography not too well done by Coxe and Alison.

The story of the conquest of Mexico told, and applauded, its teller next told that of Peru, and with equal success. The "peculiar institution" of the Incas he discussed with appropriate painstaking—that aristocratic race, whose genesis and early history are "among the mysteries that meet us so frequently in the annals of the New World, and which time and the antiquary have, as yet done little to explain"—that *haute noblesse* which was to the conquered races of the country "what the Romans were to the barbarous hordes of the empire, or the Normans to the ancient inhabitants of the British Isles." Their judicial system, almost Draconian in type; the Peruvian skill and success in public works—their postal communications, canals, high roads through and over mountain wildernesses, aerial suspension bridges, noble aqueducts, imposing terraces, and stupendous architectural feats;—their agriculture, and mastery of economical husbandry—redeeming the "rocky sierra from the curse of sterility," and enriching arid soils with guano and sardines unlimited; these are described in full, though none too diffusely. The narrative portion too, is replete with interest—the story of the Spanish adventurers and their fortunes in the New World; how religion was made the convenient cloak for a multitude of sins—how the Castilian, "too proud for hypocrisy, committed more cruelties in the name of religion than were ever practised by the pagan idolater or the fanatical Moslem"—how Pizarro battled with "impossibilities," and with his hundred-and-sixty men descended on the Peruvian camp, "a white cloud of pavilions" covering the ground "as thick as snow-flakes, for the space apparently of several

\* Mr. Prescott insists that whoever would form a just estimate of Cortes, must not confine himself to the history of the Conquest—the Conqueror's subsequent career affording different, and in some respects nobler, points of view for the study of his character—showing him intent on a system of government for the motley and antagonist races brought under Spanish rule, on repairing the mischiefs of war, and on detecting the latent resources of Mexico, and stimulating it to its highest power of production. It is much that the genius of the man does not collapse when the mission of the soldier is fulfilled. It is much that he should recognize not only a time to break down, but also a time to build up.



miles"—how he superseded reasoning by force, the craft of speech by the craft of action,—how Atahualpa was taken, condemned, and cut off, and the last of the Incas done to death. By the statistics of the Manchester Free Library, it appears, and is duly enforced as a memorable fact, that *one* man—blessedly eupeptic, as well as inordinate of appetite,—has actually accomplished the perusal of Sir Archibald Alison's twice-ten volumes; with conscientious punctuality, and nobly defiant of alien compassion, returning for tome after tome, until his right to be entitled *helluo* in virtue of *libri*, not *librorum*, was indefeasibly made out. No such statistical immortality, awaits the perusers (if there be such a word) of Mr. Prescott's histories; for they may be reckoned by centuries. He is not the sort of scribe that you skip in matter of course—as you must do in the worthy \* Sheriff's case, when he gets on corn laws and finance — although we are bound to add that the former is now and then amenable to a mild reproach, for spreading out his gold leaf too thin, and neglecting the art of condensation so invaluable in men of his craft.

The volume of essays entitled "Biographical and Critical Miscellanies," comprises Mr. Prescott's best contributions to the *North American Review*. They are pleasantly and fluently written, and are pervadingly marked by an air of intelligence and an equable sobriety of style, though without any claim to critical originality, depth, or acumen. As criticisms they evidence

\* Quære, wordy? (*Printer's Devil*).

care, scholarship, and mental refinement; but at the same time they lack power, subtlety, and muscle. With good sense and calm judgment they abound; but never are we dazzled by a sunstroke of energy and enthusiasm, or, in short, "genius." The most interesting of these essays are those devoted to Spanish and Italian literature, treated as they are in a manner highly instructive, perspicuous, and comprehensive. Besides these, we have biographical papers on Brockden Brown, the amiable novelist of Philadelphia, whose stories of "Wieland" and "Ormond," are still popular with lovers of excitement,—on Sir Walter Scott, whose character and writings are commented upon with admiring respect,—on Molière and Cervantes, the great exemplars of foreign wit and humor. There are also reviews of Washington Irving's *Conquest of Granada*, of Bancroft's *United States*, of Madame Calderon's *Mexico*, of Chateaubriand's *English Literature*, and of Allan Cunningham's *Scottish Song*. Altogether, these essays, various indeed in merit, and sometimes commonplace in thought and expression, make up a very readable volume—the information and quiet diction of which will be often turned to, with a grateful sense of relief, by readers exhausted and satiated with the perusal of "fine writing,"—a commodity whereof the supply is at least equal the demand, not only in our own wayside literature, but still more emphatically in that of Mr. Prescott's fatherland.

#### From The Examiner.

*The Poetical Works of John Keats.* With a Memoir by Richard Monckton Milnes. Illustrated by 120 designs, original and from the antique, drawn on wood by George Scharf, jun. Moxon.

THIS is the first *édition de luxe* of a poet whose muse, little disposed towards simplicity and salad, looks most herself in a rich dress like that in which Mr. Moxon now presents her to the public. The Poetry of Keats, prefaced by his friend Severn's portrait of him, and a fair and genial memoir condensed by Mr. Milnes from his larger biography of the poet, is here beautifully printed on the thickest, smoothest, and finest paper; set in quite a little garden of the wild flowers he loved, one here and one there, wherever there is a bit of space on which it may be planted; and moreover illustrated by more than a hundred very beautiful designs. A large proportion of the designs are by Mr. Scharf himself, the rest are from antiques, and there are one or two from Flaxman.

Of the singular beauty of the volume so produced there can be no doubt; though it is possible that a certain question of taste may arise out of some want of harmony between the severe classicism of Mr. Scharf and the romantic tendencies of the poet. Keats was no scholar. His creative power, and his intense love of beauty, caused him to fasten upon delicate Greek fables, and to make them full of life to his own soul,

though they had come to him in all emptiness and deadness from the soul of Lemprière. He owed much certainly to Chapman's Homer, and the Greek exuberance of life and the Greek love of beauty were inherent in him. He had not a little of the Greek in his nature. But though he possessed much of the old spirit, he used none of the old forms; and it is not in cameos and wall-paintings that we find the sort of illustration closely fitted to his verse. The poetry of Keats would be illustrated better, we suppose, by Etty than by Apelles, unless, as sometimes we are led to conclude, the great Greek painters indulged in the utmost luxury of form and color.

On the other hand it may be as certainly said that the strictly classical character of Mr. Scharf's style as an illustrator tends somewhat to correct what many may feel to be a defect in the poet, and that it will certainly prevent the reader's mind from wandering too far out of the associations popularly connected with a classic theme. We should in fairness also add that Mr. Scharf's illustrations to romantic subjects, as to Sir Galahad, are in a true romantic style, and are among the best things in the book.

About the beauty of the book therefore, as we before said, there is no question. Keats deserved such an edition as has here been published, and the appearance of it will be welcomed, we think, by a large section of the public. It is a thing to be, in the words of Keats, "a joy forever"—or in our own words, if we may descend to that bathos, a book always to have a steady sale.

From The Examiner.

THE following most touching letter appeared in the *Times* from one to whom the appeal of the poor or distressed, for such help as the largest benevolence and the most humane skill can give, is never made in vain:

SIR:—I feel impelled to solicit your kind presentation of the following distressing case to your innumerable readers, and am certain that your compliance will speedily fulfil my object, and place two accomplished ladies, now stricken down by adversity, in comparative comfort.

On the site of the building in the city of London that contains the memorial, erected by the citizens, of your fearless and costly exposure of an elaborate fraud, there existed some years ago a firm which ranked high in their day. From causes unknown to me, it fell into misfortune. Two daughters of one of the most eminent partners are now in the depth of poverty, and to poverty is added sickness. They have for some time been struggling to maintain themselves by their literary abilities. A small volume of poems, published at a shilling, and dedicated to my friend Mr. Dickens, displays a poetic taste and sensibility of a superior order. From the slender and precarious profits derived from this and another similar little volume for the young, they have endeavored, with great difficulty, to subsist.

The intellect of one has sunk in the struggle, and the other sister, while making an effort to write a few additional pieces, has fallen into sickness and lost the use of one hand. "Even from my sick bed," she touchingly writes, "the success of my poems has been nearest my heart, as well for the sake of my poor sister as for myself; these poems being our only reliance. How many have been my trials, how arduous my struggles, how enduring my determination, I cannot describe to you! To keep a home for myself and my beloved sister, to keep up the proprieties of life, and to avoid debt, I have taxed my poor failing health and powers too far! Oh! Sir, if a word from you would do us good, I beseech you to speak it."

I will only add that, if any of your benevolent readers should feel disposed to assist these poor ladies, and would kindly communicate to my friend Mr. Nottage, of 67 Upper Thames street, that gentleman would see that their good intentions were carried out.

These ladies have not the slightest knowledge of this communication.

I have the honor, Sir, to remain

Your obedient servant,

JOHN ELLIOTSON, M. D.

37 Conduit street, Hanover square, Jan. 28.

The friends whom this letter have called to the aid of the ladies in question appear anxious as far as possible to supply the relief sought by an extended circulation of the small volume mentioned by Dr. Elliotson. That it is worthy of such efforts, and a delightful little present for the young, one of the poems will perhaps sufficiently demonstrate.

#### HOPE.

Hope was a rosy maiden,  
With laughing merry eyes;  
But she always shut them pretty close  
When storms were in the skies.

'Pho! pho!' she cried, 'tis but a sham,  
The sun is peeping out;

He has only been inquiring  
What the moon has been about."

One day she lost a treasure:  
"I'll find it," was the cry;  
"Or if I don't, I'll do without,  
Or know the reason why."

Her little lambkin sicken'd;  
"Cheer up, my pet," she cried,  
"I haven't heard these dozen years  
Of any lamb that died."

The clouds at last have broken,  
And it's raining very fast.  
"Yes," sung the merry maiden,  
"Too heavily to last."

Her rosebud droop'd unkindly:  
"You naughty little thing!  
But still I have my lovely birds,  
How charmingly they sing!"

The dead leaves lay by thousands:  
"T would be very sad," said she,  
"But I see the green buds breaking out  
Upon the mother tree."

The coffin by the cradle  
Told the struggle that was o'er:  
Hope whispered in the mother's ear,  
"Tis but an angel more!"

Her bark upon the quicksands  
Ten thousand floods o'erwhelm:  
Hope look'd above, "This is the time  
For God to take the helm."

Death is standing by her pillow,  
She feels the icy kiss:  
She lifts her arms, "I go to God,  
Where Hope dissolves in Bliss."

NEW GAMING HOUSES IN PARIS.—Four only are to be allowed to exist in Paris. Foreigners of all ranks are to be admitted without examination; but French subjects will be compelled to exhibit, on entrance, not less than five hundred francs. No player is to be allowed to stake a smaller sum than one hundred francs at a time; but above this sum the stake is to be unlimited. Veron is bound to deposit by Easter a sum of forty millions by way of caution-money, and the first gambling house is to be open with the same warrant of government approval, and the same publicity as the Frascati of olden time. The *locale* is to be in the Rue Drouot, and the splendor and artistic decorations of the *grande salle* are described as something unwitnessed in Europe. An Aarb divan is to be established where the most subtle preparations of *haschisch* are to be administered to those who delight in the influence of this drug. A marble bath of vast proportions and Oriental magnificence is also talked of as a novel addition to the luxuries of such an establishment. The other arrangements are all set forth in due order, and every national refinement and indulgence peculiar to the different aristocracies of Europe is said to be inserted in the programme, as the whole system is of course ostensibly addressed to the foreign visitors in Paris.

From The Spectator, 4 Feb.

## THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

THE absence of the American Minister from the opening of Parliament is noticed with a very general regret; and the regret is scarcely lessened when we understand the trifling nature of the difficulties which impeded his presence, and the unintentional, the almost accidental cause of his absence. In the issue of invitations to the Diplomatic body, of course the American Minister was not overlooked; and the invitation, also as a matter of course, contained the usual intimation that Court-dress would be requisite. It will be remembered that the American Government had issued instructions to its representatives in foreign countries, that they should dispense with the use of the ostentatious costume worn by the Diplomatic body generally; it being considered that a plainer costume better suited the character of men representing a republic. It is, we believe, no secret in London, that on receipt of the invitation, the secretary of the American Minister represented the difficulty respecting the Court-costume arising out of the instructions; and it is equally known, we believe, that to this necessary statement no reply was made.

It should be observed, that although discretion is left to the American representatives in carrying out the instructions, compliance was expected from them on practicable occasions; and that consequently a statement of the difficulty became simply a duty of course on the part of the American Minister in the present instance. The absence of any reply—a disagreeable incident in itself—introduced a new difficulty. It is known that on his arrival in this country, Mr. Buchanan, referring to these instructions, declared that in any court of Europe he should feel himself bound to fulfil them; but that since the chief of the English Court is a lady, he should, if a wish were expressed for his observing the local custom, use his discretion in waiving the fulfilment of the instructions. It follows again, that a reply from the official quarter, properly meeting the necessary representation on the part of the American Minister, would have presented the desired opportunity for enabling him to exercise his discretion. It is seriously to be regretted that a trifle should have helped to exclude Mr. Buchanan from his place in the House of Lords.

The whole affair, indeed, is of a trifling character. If we admit that the American Government may have raised a question of dress into too great prominence, it cannot be denied that a more ridiculous tenacity is exhibited by certain of the European Courts. The custom is not like some of those ancient institutions which we should regret to abolish although they may be antiquated, from the respectability of the memories which cling to them. It is simply an arbitrary law, compelling ladies and gentlemen who go to court to adhere to the fashion of that Georgian æra which carried dress to its utmost perfection of ugliness; a fashion which we tyrannously impose on visitants at Court, and on footmen. In other respects it is customary to grant certain immunities to Ambassadors, as carrying

with them in some degree the atmosphere of their own country; and amongst other freedoms none could be more appropriate than to let them appear in any costume, provided it were decorous, which in their own country would be thought suitable to their position. If we must continue the fantastical *bal masqué* custom of forcing people to buy or hire a disguise when they approach the Sovereign on state occasions, common sense suggests that the practice should be abolished as regards the representatives of foreign countries.

From The Examiner.

## MR. CROKER AND LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

Mr. Croker writes a very abusive letter to Lord John Russell in reply to Lord John's note in the last volume of Moore's *Diary*, attributing to him, in connection with a recent article in the *Quarterly Review*, "zeal and pleasure" in the indulgence of a "safe malignity."

"Those best can paint them who have felt them most; and when it is recollected that the person to whom you have thus hypothetically attributed the results of your own personal experience is in his 74th year, and in a probably advanced stage of a mortal disease, it will be, I think, generally admitted that your lordship is well entitled to lecture us on both the theory and practice of "safe malignity."

Mr. Croker does not deny having written the article in the *Quarterly Review*—does not indeed mention it; but after describing friendly services to Moore on his own part thus continues:—

"Yet, in the midst of this continuous and friendly intercourse, it appears from the published "*Diary*," vol. iii. p. 156, under the date of the 14th of October, 1820, that, with no other cue than having happened to meet me in the street, and quite *à propos de botte*, he registers, and your lordship has published, a character of me as offensive, and apparently as malignant, as if I had been a bitter enemy whom he felt happy at knowing so little about. That, however, did not, it appears, prevent his accepting my invitation to dinner that day, and again two days after; and again, and again, whenever circumstances brought us together.

Mr. Croker then concludes with the remark that "comparing the assertion in the note of your sixth volume—that 'Moore would not have attacked a friend'—with the gross attack on me published in your third, I am forced to conclude either that you do not know what you have published, or that you have in that note advanced a falsehood which you must have known to be one."

Lord John Russell replies:—

"Chesham place, Jan. 27, 1854.

"Sir,—The note to which you refer in your letter of yesterday's date was written on the supposition that you are the author of an article on Moore in the *Quarterly Review*."

"I cannot think that the passage you mention in

'Moore's Diary,' vol. iii, p. 156, affords any justification of that article. The case is this:—

"Mr. Moore dies leaving his widow nearly unprovided for, but intrusting to my care some manuscript volumes which he thought might furnish the means for her subsistence and comfort.

"Seeing her broken health and shattered spirits, I judged it necessary for her comfort that she should remain in her cottage, and continue in her accustomed way of life.

"I endeavored in publishing the 'Diary' to omit passages offensive to individuals. I omitted some regarding you which, though not bitter or malicious, might, I thought, give you pain. There was one in which he said he found you less clever and more vain than he expected, or had supposed. This I allowed to stand.

"As one of the public men of the day, you are accustomed to write most severely of others. To escape all criticism on yourself seems an immunity hardly to be expected.

"But were you justified in embittering the last years of the widow of Moore, sneering at his domestic affections, and loading his memory with reproach, on account of the few depreciatory phrases to which you refer?

"Mrs. Moore when she was told that you were the author of the article in the 'Quarterly,' would not believe it. She was deeply wounded when she was assured it was so. She had considered you as the friend of her husband.

"In reply to a long and bitter attack, I wrote the note to which you refer. I have no further explanation to offer.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"J. RUSSELL."

Mr. Croker rejoins to this in a much longer and still more abusive letter, from which, however, we take the entire pith and substance in reproducing two brief passages.

"You sacrifice not only your argument, but the character of your poor friend, by revealing what I never suspected, that during the many years in which he was living on apparently the most friendly terms with me, and asking, and receiving, and acknowledging such good offices, both consultative and practical, as my poor judgment and interest were able to afford him, he was making entries in his 'Diary' concerning me so 'offensive,' that even the political and partisan zeal of Lord John Russell shrank from reproducing them.

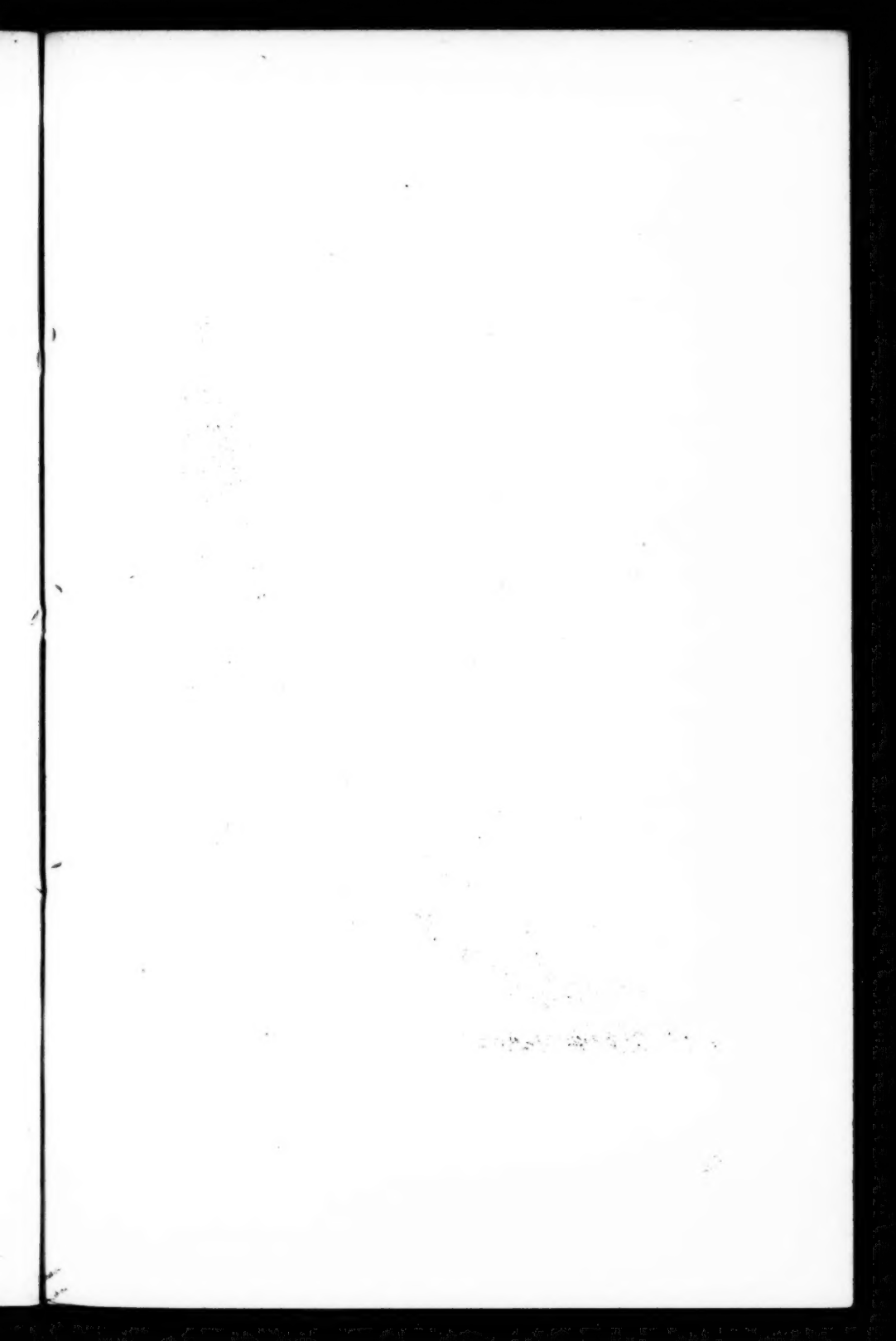
"I must be allowed to say, under such strange circumstances, that I reject your lordship's indulgence with contempt, and despise the menace, if it be meant for one, that you have such weapons in your sleeve; I not only dare you, but I condescend to entreat you, to publish all about me that you have suppressed. Let me know the full extent of your crooked indulgence and of Moore's undeviating friendship. Let us have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, while I am still living to avail myself of it. Let it not be said that 'poor dear Moore told such things of Croker that even Lord John Russell would not publish them.' I feel pretty confident that there will not be found any entry of Moore's derogatory of me against

which I shall not be able to produce his own contemporaneous evidence of a contrary tendency."

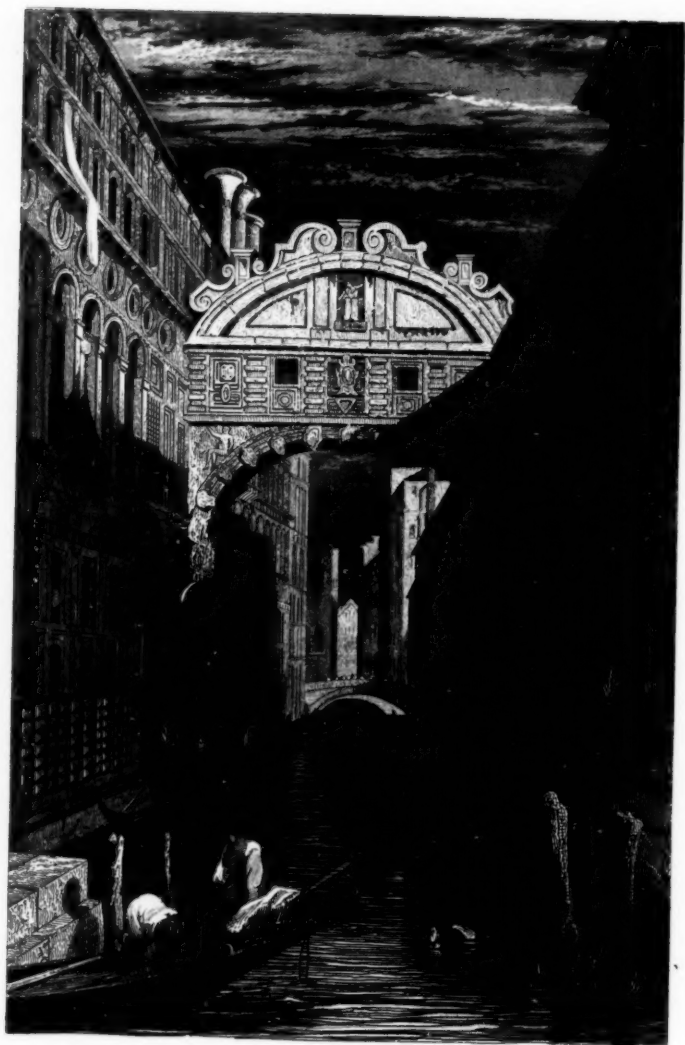
After impliedly avowing the authorship of the Quarterly Review article, he adds—"I admit that Mrs. Moore had for thirty years good reason to believe me to be her husband's friend; but if she was aware of all those 'offensive passages,' which you now admit to exist in the *Diary*, could she have supposed that he was mine?"

STARVATION AN AMERICANISM.—Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless quite true that this word, now unhappily so common on every tongue, as representing the condition of so many of the sons and daughters of the sister lands of Great Britain and Ireland, is not to be found in our own English dictionaries; neither in Todd's *Johnson*, published in 1826, nor in Richardson's, published ten years later, nor in Smart's—Walker remodelled—published about the same time as Richardson's. It is Webster who has the credit of importing it from his country into this; and in a supplement issued a few years ago, Mr. Smart adopted it as "a trivial word, but in very common, and at present, good use."—What a lesson might Mr. Trench read us, that it should be so! —*From Notes and Queries.*

SILVIO PELLICO, one of the celebrated victims of Austrian tyranny, died at Turin, on Jan. 31, aged 61 years. He was born in Piedmont, and spent a part of his youth at Lyons. He returned afterwards to Milan, where he was teacher of mathematics and where he composed several of his tragedies of which the most celebrated is *Francesca di Rimini*. He then edited a paper, of which the Austrian Government became suspicious, and it was suppressed. The breaking out of the revolutions, in Italy, of 1820, raised the tyrannical wrath of Austria, who accusing Pellico of being a Carbonari, which he was not in reality, imprisoned and condemned him to death, in 1824. The Emperor Francis I, commuted the capital condemnation to imprisonment for life, and Pellico was confined with Godfalonieri and Maromelli in the fortress of Spielberg. At the end of eight years, he was set at liberty and transported directly to the Piedmontese frontier. The period of his imprisonment he rendered celebrated by his work, *I mei prigionieri*, a book translated into various languages. There the Christian forgiveness is carried to the utmost, Pellico speaking of Austria and the Emperor with great suavity. He spent the rest of his life in Turin, keeping aloof from any political movement—a pious devotee of the Catholic religion—directed and influenced by his brother, a distinguished Jesuit, whom he even aided in answering Gioberti's first attacks against the order, in a work entitled *prolegomeni*, published about 1842.







*Bridge of Sighs*

THE BRIDGE OF THE SIGHING PRISONERS  
 IS A COVERED BRIDGE, THE ARCHES OF WHICH  
 ARE THE PRISONERS OF SIGHING, AND THE PRISONERS OF SIGHING

FRANCISCO

